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'USCIS' conduct on CW-1 permits heightens need for court's scrutiny.' » PAGE 5

Impasse over submerged lands

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» CNMI balks at MOU and patent for indefinite return of submerged lands around
» Torres lights up NOAA Secretary Jewel

The U.S. federal government has held hostage the rights to submerged lands surrounding Farallon de Pajaros, Maug, and Asuncion, over key provisions the CNMI government has balked at, as the terms go beyond what is required for transfer and binds the local government to expend large amounts of capital and resources on management plans that federal authorities could ultimately reject, and would unduly restrict the Commonwealth's ownership of these lands, according to a letter Gov. Ralph DLG Torres sent to the Department of Interior yesterday and interviews with local senior and Cabinet officials with knowledge of negotiations.

Over two years since President Barack Obama exempted from trans-

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PAL to start direct flights to Manila in June

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
Philippine Airlines will start flying direct from Manila to Saipan starting June. Century Travel was appointed as its general sales agent in the CNMI.

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

People from Saipan can soon fly to the Philippines' capital or vice versa in just about three hours.

Starting June this year, Philippine Airlines will have a direct flight twice a week from Saipan to Manila and back.

Philippine Airlines is the Philippines' flagship carrier with PAL Express as its subsidiary.

According to Tan Holdings corporate consultant David "Uncle Dave" M. Sablan, the inaugural flight will arrive on Saipan on June 15, 2016.

Tan Holdings' Century Tours was appointed the general sales agent for PAL.

PAL, which used to service the Manila-Saipan route in the early 1990s, will now be coming in and out of Saipan twice a week.

See PAL on Page 4

Aeronautical Dolphins focused in defending title

JON PEREZ
Marianas High School Aeronautical Dolphins project manager Ann Margaret Norcio, third left, joins members of the team, from left, Daniel Villarmero, Robert Malate, coach John Raulerson, Jun Young Kim, Matthew Cao, and Masrur Alam for a group photo during a break while working on their presentation for the national finals in Washington, D.C. in April.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas High School Aeronautical Dolphins can now focus their attention in preparing to defend their title in the national finals of the Real World Design Challenge with the Public School System shouldering their trip to Washington, D.C. this coming April.

The Aeronautical Dolphins will be representing the Pacific States—American Samoa, the CNMI, and Guam—after winning the 2016 RWDC Pacific State Championship last Jan. 8, their fifth straight title since joining in 2012.

Their entry, a small unmanned air-

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INSIDE

LOCAL
A Filipino organization inducted their new set of officers and board of directors for this year.
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LOCAL
Jakiir Barcinas Hossain has been busy doing volunteer work by helping in Saipan's recovery efforts from Typhoon Soudelor.
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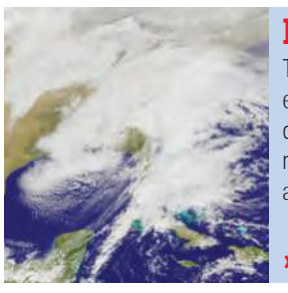

NATION
The blizzard-blanketed Eastern U.S. will confront a Monday commute slowed by slick roads, damaged transit lines and endless mounds of snow.
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Local

Consultant says Bush not out of race

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A representative for presidential candidate Jeb Bush was on island last week in hopes of getting local GOP support ahead of delegate votes at the Republican National Convention at Cleveland, Ohio this July.

Each of the five territories has a block of delegates that they send to the national convention. The local GOP is planning to send nine delegates from the CNMI.

"Increasingly it may look like we will get to a convention in July in Cleveland, Ohio, in which there is no apparent candidate who has a majority of the delegates," Alan Philp, a former policy director to then Florida governor Jeb Bush, told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview last week.

» Former Florida governor hopes for CNMI delegate support

"Every delegate counts," he added. "The territories play a major role in that process."

Philp said he was on island "to listen," and report back to candidate Bush. "The type of person he is—he really cares about every citizen, whether they have a lot of political influence or not.

"When you think about what Washington, D.C. has become, they care about the people who have money or votes, and the territories don't really have a lot of either," Philp said. "But Jeb is the type of person who really cares. I want to make sure he understands the issues" that the CNMI has with immigration, labor force shortage, and the Department of Defense.

Philp said that Bush is welcome to bringing in high-skilled workforce through the H-1 visa in the 50 states and that "would apply in the territories."

He said as they "try to create a strong jobs environment here" amid a growing economy that we have the workforce."

As the Republican Party looks to caucuses in Iowa on Feb. 1, New Hampshire n Feb. 8 and then Nevada and South Carolina, followed by the CNMI and the other territories in March, Philp said they are entering the "real campaign season now."

"The NMI is very important to this process and we urge all Republicans to go the convention," he said. "We ask for their vote for Jeb Bush because hopefully he's the best candidate.

Even as national media has narrowed their focus on the top two candidates leading the polls—Donald Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz—Philp cautioned that it would be "very premature to narrow it down" and to "keep an eye out" for a rising Bush.

"What's going to happen here is, when you do polls right now, the Republicans say yeah, I think I'm with Trump, or I think I'm with Cruz or Bush, but they all say they may change their mind."

"There is an incredible amount of fluidity in the vote right now so things are going to change pretty rapidly in the next five weeks, "he said. "I think Jeb is very well positioned in organization and message. I think he will be gaining momentum in the next few weeks."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Tribune reporter Dennis B. Chan conducts an ambush interview of presidential candidate Jeb Bush representative Alan Philp at the Governor's Office last week.

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Removal of Tanapag tanks may start around May

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

Representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting on their upcoming plan to remove the remaining fuel tanks used in the old Tanapag Fuel Farm. Concerns on human health were among the risks discussed during the meeting.

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Preliminary plans for the upcoming removal of the remaining aboveground oil storage tanks in the former Tanapag Fuel Farm was discussed in a recent public hearing held by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

According to USACE-Honolulu District senior program and project manager Helene Takemoto, their goal was to get the concerns of the public regarding their move to go in and remove the tanks.

"What we wanted to do is to get some of the community's concerns before we get to the plan because usually, it's too late to [get the concerns] after. So we wanted to get their concerns incorporated," Takemoto said in an interview.

She added that the actual plan on how the tanks will be removed is being developed and that they will come back once they get it.

During the public meeting held at Tanapag Middle School last Thursday night, USACE said there are four zones that need to be addressed namely Zone A in Sadog Tasi which has four tank sites where in one tank is still intact, and Zones B to D in Tanapag which have a total of 13 tank sites.

Takemoto noted that most of the sites don't have the tanks anymore but still has the concrete pads where the tanks used to sit as well as the burms around them.

USACE estimates the work in Zone A to be completed in one and half months, Zones B and C in one month and Zone D in two months. These will be done simultaneously.

Concerns of health risks were raised during the public meeting. However, Takemoto said that there is no risk to human health based on the preliminary assessments.

"Right now, preliminarily, there is no human health risk based on the samples," Takemoto said.

"This is a removal action. We have another project that's taking care of the soil contamination which should be finalized pretty shortly," she added.

Takemoto said most of the sites don't have any kind of contamination but another test is being conducted to confirm within the foot print of the tank whether there is still contamination or not.

"Within the footprint, we want to verify that we meet the clean up goals that we set up with [Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality] then we can tell you that the site will be cleared," Takemoto said, "There are two projects that go hand in hand. Some of the unknown data is where the tanks actually sit."

With regards to concerns about the lead content of the paint used in T-37, Takemoto said it doesn't leach.

"There is a test to determine the lead and if it leaches, then it's a problem. As far as I know, when we ran the test many years ago, it doesn't leach to the environment. That was taken into consideration when we did the human health risk too so it appears that we don't have a human health risk based on the paint and everything else," Takemoto said.

According to BECQ-Division of Environmental Quality director Ray Masga, they will make sure that the removal of the tanks will follow provisions and guidelines.

Although the project is under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act which does not require them to obtain a permit, BECQ still has the local oversight for the project.

Just this month, a bird survey has been initiated in the areas where the removal will take place.

Takemoto said the survey will last until March for them to see where the birds are and avoid them especially if they are nesting.

She added that the actual work on the tank sites will probably start in May, "give or take a month or two."

USACE will come back to hold another public meeting prior to the work to then discuss the details of the plan.

The Tanapag Fuel Farm was built in the mid- to late 1940s and was used by the U.S. Navy to provide fuel for ships and aircraft during World War II and through the 1950s, after which up to 42 tanks were abandoned.

In 2006, six tanks were removed from the same site by BECQ and the U.S. EPA. These tanks were prioritized as there was remaining oil in them and were also adjacent to homes.

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'Navy interests should be included in future leasing discussions'

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A U.S. Department of the Navy spokesman re-echoed Friday their claim to military use rights at the Tinian port, but said they do need not see any current conflict between their these rights and leases granted by the Commonwealth Ports Authority to commercial development.

The Navy's desire is that military interests are part of the future and existing planning for leases, according to Joint Region Marianas public affairs officer Tim Gorman in an email.

Gorman was responding to questions from *Saipan Tribune* on the extent of their rights at the Tinian port, after a letter from Department of the Navy lawyer John Aguon to CPA lawyer Robert Torres surfaced, in which the former notes the Navy's concern that current and future development at the Tinian port—including Bridge Investment Group's $120-million casino resort—"may compromise DoD's various rights."

Gorman said that while JRM has become aware that the CPA has recently leased certain real property at the Tinian port to a private enterprise, "JRM does not see any current conflict with any CPA lease. "

"JRM personnel communicate and work with their CNMI counterparts on a wide variety of issues on a regular basis," Gorman said. "In this instance, as the United States has certain rights contained in long-standing agreements with CNMI, such as the 1983 lease (as amended), JRM merely communicated its desire to continue to collaboratively work with the appropriate CNMI offices to help ensure that applicable DoD interests are part of the planning process in existing and future leasing actions. JRM will continue to work with our CPA colleagues to have fruitful discussions, just as we have regular discussions with our CNMI counterparts on other topics," added Gorman.

In his January letter to CPA, Aguon reminds of these "long-standing agreements between the CNMI and Defense" that "authorize and guarantee DoD various military uses at the Tinian port and airport."

"We desire to ensure these DoD rights are protected," Aguon said. His letter notes that that certain portions of the port are currently leased to Bridge Investment Group—an investor building a reported casino resort on the Tinian wharf—and that in the future, "other portions of the Tinian port may be physically or legally encumbered by either Bridge or other private entities."

IMPASSE

From Page 1

fer, among others, this three nautical mile stretch of lands around these islands within the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument—a largely unfunded mandate that also saw its seventh anniversary this month—negotiations for transfer have reached an impasse.

An official heavily involved with these talks has called the terms federal officials have pushed as "insulting."

"The creation of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument and the denial of ownership of our submerged lands and the unnecessarily challenging conditions set out in the draft patent and MOA are significant issues affecting the relationship between the United States and the CNMI," Torres said in a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewel yesterday to reignite discussion.

"To be clear, the CNMI desires title to these submerged lands," Torres also said. "We believe the federal government's acquisition of these lands may be in violation of the terms and the spirit" of the Covenant which established a relations between the CNMI and U.S.

"The ball is in their court," said Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Seman in an interview last week before Torres' letter was sent. "We are waiting if they are going to come up with a new language that will still ascertain that particular request."

Seman noted how legislation was passed to return lands back to the CNMI but because of Obama's proclamation and exempt of transfer, "the Department of Interior utilized that particular provision to hold hostage those three islands under their jurisdiction."

Concerns

Torres' letter comes several months after negotiations reached a standstill in July when the late governor Eloy S. Inos found the federal government's final position on a patent and memorandum of agreement for this transfer disagreeable with his concerns, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

The federal government offered to give the CNMI back the zero-to-three mile stretch of submerged lands within the monument. But this would be subject to a perpetual conservation easement—or the right to cross or use the land in perpetuity—that would continue even if the monument were abolished.

Federal authorities' preferred agreement mandates that the CNMI prepare a management plan for those submerged lands that also must be approved by the federal government to be valid. The CNMI will have both permitting and enforcement responsibility for the transferred lands, but no money or technical assistance has been offered as a result of these new responsibilities, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

The federal government can also enter the property to determine compliance with the conservation easement and may revoke the grant at any time in the event that they determine that the CNMI is not in compliance.

In his letter, Torres articulates his concern with these provisions, explaining them as the "underlying reason" why the Commonwealth cannot agree to the terms of transfer proposed.

"The Commonwealth cannot agree to a conservation easement that endures beyond the federal conservation status the easement is designed to protect—it is not reasonable or necessary under" Obama's proclamation to exempt transfer until MOA is agreed upon, Torres said.

"And frankly," he added, "it is not logical."

Funding

Torres also stresses points on a proposed management scheme over the submerged lands.

Management should either, one, remain under the control and management of the United States as part of the marine monument—with title to the lands still transferred to the CNMI—or two, the U.S. should assist and provide the CNMI with funding to research, write, and enforce a management plan consistent conservation, Torres said.

Funding would be crucial as—under proposed MOA—the CNMI must develop and pay for a "CNMI Submerged Lands Management Plan."

Monument management officials would also "have sole discretion to certify" whether the plan is consistent with monument goals and transfer agreements.

"This process is outside the control of the CNMI and will be expensive and inefficient," Torres said. "There is no guarantee that the federal officials will accept the CNMI's plan."

Torres asserts that—if the submerged lands should be managed consistent with the monument goals—then the lands should be governed by these plans. "The most efficient course of action…would be for the United States to manage the lands with the rest of the Monument," Torres said.

However, the CNMI would accept management responsibilities, Torres said, "if federal funds were provided to draft and implement an appropriate management plan for which the CNMI would be responsible."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

AERONAUTICAL

From Page 1

craft that uses current technology to perform moisture detection on crops and called the Cruiser, would be up against other state winners in the nationals.

Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan, in an email sent to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), said that they already informed MHS that they approved to fully fund and support the travel costs of the Aeronautical Dolphins to the nation's capital.

"I have informed MHS that fundraising for this competition is not necessary as their travel expenses will be funded out of the [PSS'] student competition program through the consolidated grant," said Commissioner Sablan.

Aeronautical Dolphins coach and Mathematics teacher John Raulerson said they are very much thankful for PSS' decision to fund their trip. The team's trip would cost $10,000 alone.

"Now, instead of doing fundraising activities like a bake sale or a car wash, these kids could now concentrate more on getting things done. They need to focus in coming up with a competitive presentation since the next is a bigger competition," said Raulerson.

The MHS Math teacher has a lot of experience in aeronautics as a chief mechanic, chief inspector, and consultant. He has taught aviation physics and aeronautics, which are the foundations of RWDC.

"The new challenge is to tweak the design to make it more of an efficient aircraft. Working on the design alone amounts to countless hours. I just give them the directions and they do everything," added Raulerson, who was given a plaque of appreciation by the CNMI Legislature for his contributions.

He would accompany the seven-member Aeronautical Dolphins that is composed of project manager Ann Margaret Norcio, marketing specialist Edna Nisola, project mathematician Masrur Alam, simulations engineer Jun Young Kim, mission planner Matthew Cao, aircraft design engineer Robert Malate, and systems planner Daniel Villarmero.

Norcio said that their design was a team effort where what they would do is to first consult each other. It took them almost three hours to agree and finish with the design on the computer alone.

"It was a real challenge for us since we are restricted with time. We have less than two months to work after the national challenge with the Pacific State due in January. So there was really no time to celebrate."

RWDC is an annual competition for high school students, grades 9 to 12, where they work on real world engineering challenges. The winning team earns a $50,000 scholarship from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

PAL

From Page 1

The 144-seater plane servicing the area will leave Manila late evening on Wednesdays and Sundays and will arrive and leave Saipan on early morning of Thursdays and Mondays. A one-hour turnaround will be allotted for loading and unloading.

Twelve seats are allotted for first class, while the rest is economy class.

"The only thing that is left that we don't know yet is the one way or round-trip ticket rate for economy, business, or first-class. We'll get that very, very soon," Sablan said.

PAL president and chief operating officer Jaime Bautista, in his interviews with other news agencies, has also announced the commencement of Manila-Saipan flights this year.

As the general sales agent for Philippine Airlines, all ticket sales will go through Century Travel.

"All the bona fide travel agencies on Saipan may sell tickets but they have to come through us because we are the general sales agent and we're going to be the only recognized travel agency here on Saipan so we have a full contract on the flow of business to Philippine Airlines," Sablan said.

Century Travel has been selling tickets for other PAL routes for a long time now. And now, Sablan said they will promote the airline more.

"We are now much more geared to promote Philippine Airlines because of our commitment to promote Philippine Airlines traffic,"

Sablan said they are ready for the added service that they will be providing for the community.

"We have already trained our people to handle the additional load on Century Travel business," Sablan said.

"The other thing that we plan to do is invite travel agents to meet with us so we can brief them on what is coming about. I intend to do that within the next couple of weeks," he added.

Sablan said PAL's direct flight will have a big impact on Saipan particularly those who are under the medical referrals program.

"We have many medical referrals that we are presently serving. The impact is going to be very big and very good because we do not have to wait hours and hours in Guam," Sablan said.

"The direct flight will eventually eliminate the need to fly to Guam on Cape Air. As you know the CNMI has been concerned about the services that Cape Air has been providing. This will virtually eliminate worry such as waiting time and flight cancellations. We are very enthusiastic and looking forward to the changes," he added.

Welcome news

The return of the direct flight services of PAL is welcome news for the thousands of Filipinos in the CNMI.

United Filipino Organization president Bong Malasarte said it will be a big help to all the *kababayans* (countrymen) out here.

"Our *kababayans* will no longer have a hard time going home and have their vacations. Usually they are having trouble with the need to pass through Guam," Malasarte said in Filipino.

"It will really help our *kababayans* and I think many will finally be able to visit home," he added.

Malasarte also noted that there is pride in having our flagship carrier service the island and it will also be an opportunity to promote the Philippines as a destination as well.

He added that it will offer a huge convenience to travelers.

"At the same time, you'll feel safe since there are many delays with other airlines. Also, now you can just sleep all the way from Saipan to Philippines. You can take a rest and relax and when you wake up, you're already home," Malasarte said.

'USCIS' conduct on CW-1 permits heightens need for court's scrutiny'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The conduct of the Department of Homeland Security's implementation of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' agency rule pertaining to Commonwealth-only worker, or CW1-permits, would only serve to heighten the need for the federal court's scrutiny and the issuance of a declaratory judgment on this issue, according to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

In CUC's response to the U.S. District Court or NMI's notice of intent to dismiss the lawsuit filed by CUC and its 18 foreign workers, CUC legal counsel James Sirok asserted that under the U.S. Administrative Procedure Act allows any CW-1 worker, including the 18 workers, to continue to work until USCIS makes a final determination on that worker's petition for renewal (extensions of status/stay).

"There is no limit to this time period under the APA," Sirok said.

Sirok said plaintiffs CUC and its 18 foreign workers are entitled to a broad statutory right, which DHS and USCIS are attempting to narrowly restrict by placing a 240-day limit on it through conduct which is contrary to law.

Sirok

Sirok said DHS and USCIS have no specific statutory authorization or jurisdiction to modify by agency regulation provisions of the APA, a law enacted by the U.S. Congress.

This conduct, the lawyer said, supports plaintiffs' position that their claims are not rendered moot simply by DHS's implementation of an USCIS agency rule.

Sirok said CUC, as a plaintiff, still has a cause of action because it still has an expired CW-1 employee, whose authorization expired on Dec 31, 2015, unable to work until at this time as a result of the position being taken by DHS and USCIS that they cannot work after Dec. 31, 2015.

"This is the present situation notwithstanding the anticipated adoption of the rule ("new rule") allowing for a CW-1 renewal worker to continue to working up to 240 days after the expiration of the CW-1 authorization when a timely petition for a renewal of a stay/status has been filed," he said.

Sirok pointed out that this anticipated "new rule" provides some relief, but such relief is still contrary to existing law.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recently expressed her intent to dismiss plaintiffs' lawsuit against Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson and other federal officials, once the final rule on Commonwealth-only worker, or CW-1 permits, has gone into effect on Feb. 14, 2016.

Manglona said if CUC and its 18 foreign workers object to dismissal of their lawsuit over the delay of CUC's petition for renewal of CW-1 permits, even in light of publication of the final rule, they may file a memorandum in opposition to dismissal.

Manglona noted that last Jan. 13, the federal government announced that the final rule "Enhancing Opportunities for H-1BI, CW-1, and E-3 Nonimmigrants and EB-1 Immigrants," which amends the regulations so as to authorize continued employment for CW-1 nonimmigrants if a petitioner has timely filed a petition requesting an extension of stay, is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on Jan. 15, 2016, and will be effective 30 days from the date of publication.

Manglona said it appears that implementation of these changes in the regulations will prevent a recurrence of the harm that CUC complains of in the lawsuit.

As of last week, 17 of 18 foreign workers who joined CUC's lawsuit, have received approvals of petition for renewal of their Commonwealth-only worker, or CW-1 permits.

Last Jan. 12, Manglona ordered CUC and the 18 workers to explain why their lawsuit should not be dismissed as moot.

Manglona issued the order as she granted plaintiffs' motion for withdrawal for a preliminary injunction.

CUC currently employs 34 nonresident workers holding the CW-1 CNMI only nonimmigrant transitional worker status.

Manglona earlier denied plaintiffs' request for a temporary restraining order that would allow these CW-1 workers to immediately return to work.

Manglona said plaintiffs, however, may still pursue their claim for a permanent injunction.

Sirok then filed plaintiffs' first amended complaint against the same defendants—Homeland Security Secretary Johnson, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Saarah Saldana, and U.S. Citizenship Director Leon Rodriguez.

In the first amended complaint, Sirok added a claim that plaintiffs are able to work after the expiration date of their respective authorizations so long as the authorizations remain valid in accordance with law.

8 file bankruptcy cases in 2015

There were eight bankruptcy cases, including the owner of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, that were filed in the U.S. District Court for the NMI in 2015.

Of eight bankruptcy cases, six were Chapter 7 petitions, and the rest were Chapter 11 petitions. Five were individuals and three were companies, according to court records.

Under Bankruptcy Chapter 7, most assets of the debtor are liquidated as quickly as possible to pay off his or her creditors to the extent possible and to free the debtor to start anew.

Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, on the other hand, allows a debtor to enter into an agreement with creditors under which all or a part of the business continues. Chapter 11's objective is to adjust and reorganize a debtor's obligations so as to allow the business to continue.

The all-time highest record of bankruptcy cases in the CNMI was in 2005 when 31 cases were filed.

One of the reasons why many cases were filed in 2005 was because it was beginning that year when the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act took effect. The act increased the filing fee and made bankruptcy petitions stricter, among other things.

In 2001 and 2002, there were 25 bankruptcy cases filed, the second highest number filed in the CNMI.

The bad economy reportedly contributed to the filing of 25 petitions in 2002, while a bad economy made worse by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. mainland reportedly triggered the filing of 25 petitions in 2001. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Air Force to conduct training at FDM

ASAN, Guam—The Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following dates and times:

■ Jan. 26 and 28 from 10am to 4pm

■ Jan. 29 from 7am to 1pm

The general public, especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators, are advised to stay clear of the area during the dates and times indicated.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 12-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. Farallon de Medinilla plays a special and unique role in national defense because its location provides frequent access that supports established training requirements. In addition, the air and sea space in the Farallon provides sufficient room for the many different attack profiles necessary to replicate training opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

Yamada family offers $10K reward for info on case

» Torres meets with family

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yesterday met with Japanese consul Hitori Kikuchi and the family of Natsuki and Chinatsu Yamada, the sisters who went missing while vacationing on Saipan in 2014.

The family updated Torres during a meeting around 11am yesterday on their work with the Department of Public Safety on the unsolved case.

Natsuki, 33, and Chinatsu, 26, disappeared last June 30 2014. Their rental car was found abandoned at Wing Beach in Marpi that day. They were supposed to fly back to Japan that same day. The two arrived on the island on June 28.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Yamada family and consul Hitori Kikuchi pose for a photo with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres after meeting with him yesterday.

As DPS needs more information to solve the case, the family is offering a $10,000 cash reward for anyone who can offer case-related information.

"We encourage the community if you have any information that could help with this case to reach out to the Department of Public Safety," Torres said in a statement to *Saipan Tribune*. "The family has experienced much grief and sadness over the loss of the sisters and if we as a community can help bring closure to this difficult chapter in their lives, we should do what we can."

Woman arrested for allegedly stealing brother's check

Police arrested last week a woman who allegedly used a check that was left in a rental car that was being used by her brother, who was then vacationing in Guam.

Eloise Margaret Jones Castro, 31, was taken to Superior Court yesterday for theft.

Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed a $10,000 cash bail on Castro.

Preliminary hearing will be on Feb. 2.

Assistant public defender Cindy Nesbit was appointed as counsel for Castro.

Police detective Andrew S. Taimanao said Castro allegedly met with the owner of an auto repair shop during the first week of this month.

Castro allegedly gave the shop owner a check payable to Justin J. Locke worth $2,000 as down payment to fix her car.

Castro told the shop owner that Locke is her brother who is vacationing in Guam.

The shop owner agreed to give $350 cash to Castro because the latter's friend usually sells him car parts.

Castro, however, later asked for more money and the shop owner gave her a total of $700.

Locke then filed a police report, resulting on Castro's arrest. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

KHS quarterly awardees eyeing military service

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Kagman High School students Alfredo Napalinga Ngalongalo Jr. and DeFaustina Joseph Camacho are planning to enter two different branches of the U.S. Armed Forces after graduation.

Ngalongalo Jr.

Camacho

Ngalongalo and Camacho were the first recipients of KHS' Male and Female Students of the Quarter, which was given last week to honor Ayuyus who not only excel academically, but also show great character as a member of the community.

Both are members of the KHS Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps with Ngalongalo, now a junior, hoping to be accepted to the U.S. Military Academy of West Point in New York, while Camacho aims to enter the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs in Colorado. West Point graduates are commissioned as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

Candidates who want to enter in an academy of any of the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces need to apply directly and receive nomination from a member of the U.S. Congress or their delegate in the U.S. Territories—American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virigin Islands—they live in. The President and Vice President of the U.S. can also nominate cadets.

Ngalongalo now holds a rank of major in his fifth year with KHS' JROTC program, while ninth grader Camacho has recently joined as private. Both say English is their favorite subject and they also enjoy the outdoors.

"I'm the same at school and at home. I don't treat things differently and deal with people equally," said Ngalongalo, who is the head altar server at the Santa Remedios Parish in Tanapag.

"I'm directly focusing with my SATs right now. And they are planning to make me the [KHS JROTC] batallion commander next year," added Ngalongalo, who is also a member of the National Junior Honor Society.

Camacho, who was named by her parents to Polish saint Faustina Kowalska, added that she likes spending Saturdays hiking in Marpi or reading teen fiction or romance books on Wattpad, a mobile platform for books written by young authors.

"I hope to finish with a nursing degree or become a female pilot if ever I get into the U.S. Air Force Academy. I still have time to prepare and I'll just do my best in everything I do," added Camacho, who is a member of the Talofa Polynesian dance group.

KHS acting principal Leila Staffler said their leadership team, composed of faculty and staff, were the brains behind the Male and Female Students of the Quarter awards, whose candidates have gone over and beyond in representing the school in character and academics.

"The leadership team was thinking of a way to recognize students from each class that are nominated by the staff. It is a school-wide program with our goal is to motivate all students. We want to celebrate positivity in the school and we want to honor students who exemplify what it means to be an Ayuyu," added Staffler.

"Providing a safe and challenging environment for students to develop and apply the skills and knowledge they learned in order to become productive members of the community is our mission here at KHS."

Tiffany Robinson heads the rewards committee, which first made a research of what kind of rubric system other schools are using before coming up with their own. KHS used a rubric that measured the students' key characteristics like attendance, work ethic, citizenship, and respect.

Stiffler said both Ngalongalo and Camacho are still eligible for nomination the next time they give out the award, which set to exemplify the character and academic achievements of each student.

"We want the award to be more exclusive that's why we decided to have it school-wide and not give out to each grade level. I'm proud that a freshman and a junior were the first recipients of the award. Yes, they are still eligible even though they already won."

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPY • CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-COTA/FTA-046

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2016 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PREPARATION, DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE 2015 FISCAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF TRANSIT AUTHORITY (COTA)"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER JANUARY 26, 2016 AT COTA OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR OF THE NMI RETIREMENT FUND BUILDING LOCATED IN CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; PROPOSERS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH FTA FEDERAL CONTRACT CLAUSES AS APPLICABLE.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL IF, IN ITS OPINION TO DO SO, WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ALFREDA P. CAMACHO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-ZB-015

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 26, 2016 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL FOR THE ZONING BOARD OFFICE"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER, JANUARY 26, 2016 AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. DIEGO C. BLANCO, CHAIRMAN, COMMONWEALTH ZONING BOARD, CALLER BOX 10007, SAIPAN, MP 96950 AND DELIVERED TO THE ZONING BOARD OFFICE ON THE 2ND FLOOR OF JOETEN DANDAN COMMERCIAL BUILDING, SAIPAN NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, FEBRUARY 12, 2016.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL IF, IN ITS OPINION TO DO SO, WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT, ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ DIEGO C. BLANCO
CHAIRMAN, ZONING BOARD

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

INVITATION FOR BIDS

(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016 • TIME: 10:00 AM

NMHC IFB 2016-002

"Ground Maintenance Services for NMHC's Properties in Tinian"

Governor Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Governor Victor Hocog, through Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors are hereby giving notice that NMHC is soliciting sealed bids for the Ground Maintenance Services for its properties in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Interested firms may pick up Bid Specifications at the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan or at its Field Office in San Jose Village, Tinian, beginning Monday, January 25, 2016, from 7:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m., during regular business hours, except CNMI holidays.

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Field Office located in the Janet H. King's Building in San Jose Village on **February 10, 2016, at 9:00 a.m.** Bidders will have the opportunity to tour the housing subdivision and other properties owned by NMHC to be covered under the proposed contract. Attendance at this conference and site visits are considered essential to the bidders' understanding of the project elements, and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder. Inquiries regarding this solicitation must be addressed in writing to the NMHC Corporate Director at P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than **9:00 a.m., February 12, 2016.**

NMHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in the bids if determined to be in its best interest. All bids received shall become the property of the Commonwealth Government.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

INVITATION FOR BIDS

(This ad is paid for by NMHC with HUD funds.)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 08, 2016 • TIME: 11:00 AM

NMHC IFB 2016-006

"Rehabilitation of Kagman Community Park"

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor Hocog, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, hereby give notice that NMHC is soliciting sealed bids from interested licensed companies to provide construction services for the rehabilitation of the Kagman Community Park located at the Kagman Community Center, Kagman III, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Interested individuals or firms may pick up a copy of the Project Package beginning **February 1, 2016** at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI and austerity holidays. A non-refundable payment of **Twenty Five Dollars** ***($25.00) is required for each set.*** Payment shall be by cash, credit card, money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

A **mandatory pre-bid conference** will be held at **1:00 p.m. on February 23, 2016,** at the NMHC Conference Room in Garapan, Saipan, and all interested bidders will be given the opportunity to walk through the proposed project site, familiarize themselves with the required work and ask questions regarding the project. Attendance at this conference and site visit are considered essential to the bidders' understanding of the project elements and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder. For information, contact Mr. Jesse S. Palacios, Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planner/Environmental Officer at (670) 234-6866/7689 during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI and austerity holidays.

NMHC reserves the right to reject any and all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in the bids if determined to be in its best interest. All bids received shall become the property of the Commonwealth Government.

/s/ Edward C. Sablan
NMHC Board Chairman & Contracting Officer

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Division of Procurement & Supply

REtroSPECT benefit concert set for Feb. 6

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Retro-pop singing group REtroSPECT reunites in a one-night concert on Feb. 6, at the Fiesta Resort & Hotel Saipan's Hibiscus Hall for the benefit of ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata Foundation International.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Internationally known retro-pop musical group REtroSPECT reunites for a one night-only benefit concert billed RETROWORLD REtroSPECT Reunion Concert Tour 2016 on Feb. 6 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Part of the proceeds of the concert will be donated to ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata International Foundation.

REtroSPECT will again belt out their original Filipino songs *Bakit Nga Ba?* (Why are we?), *Who Will?, Chika Doo*, *Getaway*, *Trilogy*, *It's Party Time*, and *If I Don't Love You.*

They will also have their own rendition of classic hits by ABBA, Earth Wind & Fire, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Tina Turner, Boy George, and other '70s, '80s, and '90s cover songs.

Group members are now based in different parts of the world. Leader and producer J. Martin is now based in Guam, Em-J now resides in Naples in Italy, Goldie now lives in Vancouver, while Ogie stays in Manila.

This will be REtroSPECT's second time to hold a show on Saipan after also performing in a sold out back-to-back concert with singer Geneva Cruz last June 11, 2011, as part of the celebration of the Philippine Independence Day.

Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan general manager Abner Acosta said the group gained a huge following in Guam after being an in-house band in one of the local bars there.

Acosta added that the concert will have limited seating with the Hibiscus Hall can only accommodate 300. Tickets cost $30 for general admission and $50 for VIP.

The American Federation of Musicians of the U.S. and Canada certified REtroSPECT as an internationally renowned retro pop group.

Saipan will be the fifth stop of REtroSPECT's 16-city world tour that started on Jan. 15 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City, Philippines during the annual Sinulog Festival.

They also had shows in Iloilo City and Manila in the Philippines and are scheduled for another concert at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort in Tamuning on Friday, Feb. 5.

The 23rd ALIW Awards' Best Group Performer Hall of Fame awardee will also have two-night shows Los Angeles (Feb. 12 and 13), San Francisco (Feb. 19 and 20), and Queens in New York (Feb. 26 and 27).

The cities of Toronto (March 5), Calgary (March 6), Vancouver (March 11), and Victoria in British Columbia (March 12) will be their next stop. The group will then continue their tour in Europe with Milan, Italy their first gig on March 19.

They will also have shows in Liverpool and London in the United Kingdom on March 25 and 26 before ending their world tour in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on April 1.

Probationer's supervised release revoked again for using 'ice' anew

The federal court has revoked again the supervised release of probationer Vicente Aldan Sablan for using methamphetamine or "ice" anew and for violating other conditions.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona last week sentenced Sablan to imprisonment of five days.

Manglona said upon release today, Tuesday, Sablan will be placed on 34 months of supervised release.

During the supervised release, the defendant will be required, among other things, to participate in a substance abuse treatment program.

Sablan admitted to violating the allegations in the petition to revoke his supervised release.

U.S. probation officer Gregory Arriola recommended a five-month sentence and that the defendant shall participate in the drug court program.

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe recommended the revocation of defendant's supervised release, imposition of prison term, and participation in drug court.

Attorney Janet H. King, court-appointed counsel for Sablan, recommended a supervised release and no prison term because of his current employment.

King said Sablan is willing to participate in the drug court program.

According to Arriola, Sablan used methamphetamine on Oct. 15, 26, and Nov. 3, 2015.

Arriola said Sablan failed to report for random drug testing on Oct. 11, 17, 18, and Nov. 3, 2015.

Sablan also failed to report for substance abuse treatment on Oct. 17, 19, 20, and 21, 2015.

Sablan pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and was sentenced in April 2014 to eight months imprisonment, with credit of 28 days. He was placed on three-year supervised release.

In February 2015, the court revoked Sablan's supervised release and sentenced him to one month in prison and 35 months of supervised release for drug use and failure to comply with the substance abuse program. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

January 26, 2016

This is to inform the general public that the **TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION (TCGCC)** will conduct a public hearing on Friday, January 29, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. at the Tinian Superior Court.

The purpose of this hearing is to consider evidence related to the "issuance of a casino license" of the suitability and qualifications of ALTER CITY GROUP, INC., and its shareholders and officer, to hold a Casino Operator's License for the operation of a hotel-casino complex on Tinian.

Donald M. Hofschneider
Acting Executive Director

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY**
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** [1]

III. **REPORTS**
   a. Chair's Report
   b. Executive Director's Report

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**
   a. Legal Counsel's Contract of Attorney Janet H. King

V. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** [2]

VI. **MISCELLANEOUS/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

[1] Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

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If available for existing building showing
exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price

Bayani Association inducts new officers

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Filipino organization inducted their new set of officers and board of directors for this year.

In a gathering, the officers and board officials were sworn in at the Hibiscus Hall of Fiesta Resort and Spa last Saturday.

This year, Nelida B. Atalig will be serving as the association's president.

"It is indeed a great honor to be elected as president of this great organization. I am deeply moved and thankful for the confidence you have shown me," Atalig said in her acceptance speech.

"I ask for your total support, maximum cooperation, and please do bring a wealth of experience, talent, and passionate service to our people. We need them as well as they need us," she added.

Atalig also paid tribute to outgoing president Mario Mayuga.

"Mr. Mayuga has done an outstanding job on behalf of each of us…We all owe him a huge debt of gratitude. It is impossible to convey the enormity of the task he has performed and often in very trying circumstances," Atalig said.

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

New officers of the Bayani Association headed by its new president Nelida Atalig were sworn in during their induction ceremonies at the Fiesta Resort last Saturday.

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

The new board of directors of the Bayani Association was also inducted into office by Philippine honorary consul Glicerio Arago.

In his prior remarks, Mayuga enumerated the achievements and projects the association has accomplished this year including their successful fundraising anniversary event, Queen of the World pageant. Through this they were able to fund many initiatives such as the donations made to the Office on Aging and Dandan Middle School.

They were also able to help with the distribution of relief goods after Typhoon Soudelor and helped out with the United Filipino Organization's and the Philippine honorary consul's projects and events.

Elected vice president is Joel Vallega. For secretary, Cherry Beth Casilla will be serving the organization, while Leonila Mendoza will serve as the assistant. Ladyvir Canape is this year's treasurer, and Sam Justo will be the assistant treasurer.

As for public relations officer, Beth Gonzales will serve this year. Auditor will be Marie Paz Meister and the marshalls are Emil Garra, Jojo Soto, and Jimmy de Peralta.

This year's board of directors is headed by chair Bok Enano and secretary Olive Yana. Members are Evelyn Deazata, Flor Miranda, Lolly Velasco, Ronald de Ramos, Mayuga, and Atalig.

Philippine honorary consul Glicerio "Eli" Arago presided over the swearing in of the officers and commended the association for their continued support for the office.

"I am truly proud of Bayani Association for its continued partnership with the consul's office….let us continue the partnership, let us sustain the strong bond that we have and let us strive for a better future," Arago said in his inspirational message.

United Filipino Organization president Bong Malasarte also called for unity with all the organizations and its members and said that everyone can be good leaders, especially if they have become good followers.

UFO is an umbrella organization of Filipino groups on Saipan.

Underwood to answer sexual assault controversy at roundtable

University of Guam President Dr. Robert Underwood has issued the following statement regarding Gov. Eddie Calvo's letter to Speaker Won Pat:

"The University of Guam is eager to answer questions at a round table or public hearing as organized by Speaker Won Pat who is chair of the Committee on Higher Education. We know this is a highly charged topic to many and justifiably so. The University of Guam has followed its procedures and is currently in the process of revising its policies and procedures to further improve the learning environment at the university. We do not tolerate sexual harassment, and we do not tolerate sexual assault. We have not covered up any crimes or scandals, and we have cooperated fully with the civil authorities."

Underwood asks any member of the university community who has information or has been a victim of sexual harassment to call the UOG EEO Office at 735-2244. Confidentiality is assured. The public may also call Phil Tydingco at the Attorney General's Office at 475-3406 ext. 2410 or Tony Blas at extension 2210. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 26, 2000

DPH seeks more funds to match fed grants

The Department of Public Health is seeking a $33.9 million budget for Fiscal Year 2001 as the Medicaid Program continues to be under funded due to budgetary constraints. A huge amount of money for medical referral program has been saved with the hiring of specialists from the U.S. mainland but some of the cases that they have recently for treatment in U.S. hospitals have been serious illnesses which are very expensive. With the tight budget, DPH has been trying to maximize federal grants to offset the cost of implementing certain programs. Mr. Villagomez has made it clear that he does not want any disruption in its Medicaid and medical referral programs.

Gov't cuts travel expenses by 22%

Overall actual travel expenses by the government exceeded its Fiscal Year 1999 allotment by a little over $1 million, although it dropped by 22 percent from $4.6 million in FY 1998 to $3.6 million, a report from the Office of the Governor showed. According to the report, government-wide allotment for travel during the last fiscal year was $2.507 million while overall expenditures reached $3.605 million. The executive branch managed to cut its travel expenses from $3.5 million in FY 1998 to $2.6 million last year, of which, 57 percent or at least $1.5 million was for medical referral. The government is hoping to realize further cuts in expenditures through careful scrutiny of the vehicle and travel requirements of each department and other public offices.

January 26, 2001

JAL arrivals climb 5 percent

Japanese visitors ferried by Japan Airlines to the island climbed five percent in December 2000, representing more than 900 tourists, compared with figures recorded during the same month in 1999. JAL-Saipan Sales Manager Yasuyoshi Kinoshita attributed the five percent increase in visitor arrivals to calmed fears over what has been overly-publicized "millennuum bug" during the 1999-2000 transition. According to JAL's statistical report, the airline ferried 18,066 passengers from four cities in Japan in November 2000 , up from 17,538 passengers during the same period in 1999. He added that the tours yielded positive results that may spur more school trips here.

CHC hires new pediatrician

Dr. Judit Voros arrived on island last week and has signed a long term contract to provide full time Pediatric Neonatology services at the Commonwealth Health Center CHC. Dr. Voros joins Dr. Peter Untalan, Dr. Sydney Kometani, Dr. Ayesha Mirza, and Dr. Norma Ada in the Department of Pediatrics at CHC. Dr. Voros came to Saipan from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (Ottawa, Canada) and the world famous Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Canada). Dr. Voros has considerable training and experience in the field of Neonatology, the medical specialty for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the newborn. Dr. Voros is available for consultation in Pediatrics and Neonatology at CHC.

January 26, 2005

Hotels post record highs, lows in 2004

Saipan's hotel room occupancy last year was the highest in seven years, while the average room rate was at an all-time low since the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands started collecting statistics in 1992. Despite this, the organization is upbeat about investments being made in the hotel industry and future potential for the market. According to HANMI, the increased occupancy with reduced room rates generally means that hotels brought their prices down to attract visitors. This doesn't translate to good business because it strains resources—manpower, utilities and other operational expenses. Many hotels are still struggling to bring their earnings up to an acceptable level and some businesses are still in cost-cutting mode, said HANMI chairwoman and Century Hotel general manager Lynn A. Knight.

MVA asks for 1$M to promote the CNMI

The Marianas Visitors Authority is asking the CNMI government $1 million for its marketing campaign, particularly for the China market, on the heels of the Commonwealth obtaining Approved Destination Status from the Chinese government. During a membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at the Aqua Resort Club's Raraina Restaurant yesterday, MVA managing director Vicky Benavente said the agency needs the funding support so it can adequately market the CNMI in this relatively new market. Chinese outbound travel has consistently soared in the past years, outpacing the growth in outbound Japanese travel. In 2003, outbound travel from China reached almost the same level as that of Japan, which registered at less than 20 million.

Ex-chief prosecutor Flaherty, OPA legal counsel Kost take same journey

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former chief prosecutor Brian Flaherty and Office of the Public Auditor legal counsel Ashley Kost went to law school together at the University of Iowa College of Law. The two came to Saipan about the same time in 2012.

On Friday, Flaherty and Kost took their oath before CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro after passing the CNMI Bar examination last July.

Kost said she feels good taking oath as CNMI Bar member.

Kost said for a lot of people getting sworn in the CNMI means that they are going to stay and are invested in the community.

"So I feel good to take that next step," said Kost, who has been working as legal counsel for OPA for three years now.

» Flaherty, Kost take oath as newest CNMI Bar members

Kost, of Minnesota, arrived on Saipan in October 2012 to work as OPA legal counsel, her first job outside law school.

She went to the College of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, where she got her bachelor's degree in political science.

She attended the University of Iowa College of Law, and received her law degree in 2012.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Office of the Public Auditor legal counsel Ashley Kost and former chief prosecutor Brian Flaherty pose for a photo after the swearing in ceremony where they took oath as newest CNMI Bar members at the CNMI Supreme Court on Friday.

Kost said she saw a posting for a position at OPA on Saipan so she thought it sounded fun and exciting.

She said the OPA job sounded like something different.

She said it is something different to do with one's legal degree in another jurisdiction because normally with a legal degree "you're kind of confined to where you took the Bar exam right away."

"So I saw this as an adventure," she said.

Kost believes that she originally came out here for the adventure and that she stayed because of how much she enjoys working at OPA and how much she enjoys the community and the friends that she made out in the Commonwealth.

"I'm staying at OPA. I love OPA," she said when asked about her plans after passing the Bar.

For Flaherty, his plan right now is to engage in private practice.

"I'm looking forward to practicing law in the CNMI. I'm looking forward to get into work," said Flaherty, who left the Office of the Attorney General last April.

For personal reasons, Flaherty decided to stay in the CNMI after he already left the OAG.

On the Bar examination, Flaherty said it was tough and "takes a lot of studying and a lot of work."

Flaherty's father, Edd Flaherty, came to Saipan last Jan. 17 from Iowa for vacation and to attend the swearing in ceremony held on Friday at the CNMI Supreme Court.

Flaherty served a total of two years and a half at OAG. He joined OAG in July 2012 as an assistant attorney general, then as chief prosecutor of the OAG's Criminal Division for a year.

He had stated that the Commonwealth has been a great place for him to enjoy the outdoors, enjoy recreational facilities and opportunities, and marvel the beauty of the island.

SI-NMI Program meeting will highlight Saipan Cares for Animals

Soroptimist International-Northern Mariana Islands meets quarterly with another local organization to learn more about what they do, and about how our organizations may benefit one another. This month we highlight Saipan Cares for Animals. This organization is a dedicated group of volunteers whose mission is to improve the life of every animal on Saipan through socialization, medication and sterilization.

Working with the Saipan Mayor's Office and the Humane Society International, SCFA wants to humanely control the animal population of Saipan through spaying and neutering. They work toward providing affordable health care to pet owners. And work on educating the public on the proper care of their pets.

If you are interested in adopting, volunteering or donating, please contact SCFA at 670-789-9464. And if you'd like to donate to Saipan Cares for Animals, please visit https://www.gofundme.com/SaipanCares.

Saving one animal won't change the world, but the world will change for that one animal!

A buffet lunch will be held on Thursday, Jan. 28, at Giovanni's Restaurant in Hyatt Regency. Advance reservations are required. Cost is $20 per person. Tickets are available by contacting Jill Arenovski at 287-9395 or by contacting any member of SINMI.

For more information on Soroptimist International of Northern Mariana Islands club, please e-mail soroptimistnmi@gmail.com or call 287-9395. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
PO Box 502149; Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 Fax: (670) 235-7147

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria, San Jose, Tinian, on Friday, January 29, 2016,* at *6:00 p.m.* on the application of *Alter City Group Incorporated*, Applicant, for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *golf and casino resort*, all pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further information.*** For fur ther information, please contact CDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its offices at the CDA Building in San Jose, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

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Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXVI, Issue No. 17

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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

An unnatural disaster in Flint

A year ago, Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder chose an unfortunate metaphor to launch his second term in office. During his state of the state address in January 2015, the Republican governor shared his vision for bringing all Michigan residents into a "river of opportunity."

Clearly, he didn't mean the Flint River, which was the source of a health emergency that has grown over the past 21 months and turned into an appalling political scandal that reaches the governor. Call it Snyder's "river of failure."

By the time the embattled governor delivered his 2016 State of the State address Tuesday evening, he had already admitted that the crisis in Flint, where contaminated tap water from the river has caused widespread lead poisoning and possibly an outbreak of Legionnaires disease that has killed 10 people, was a failure of his leadership.

For many of the 99,000 residents of Flint, a struggling industrial town about 70 miles northwest of Detroit, the state's slow response to the crisis has sparked outrage and calls for the governor's resignation.

The troubles began in 2014, when Flint, under the leadership of a state-mandated emergency manager, opted to switch the city's water source to the Flint River from a Detroit-operated pipeline from Lake Huron, a move that would save an estimated $5 million over two years while the city waited to connect to another, new pipeline back to Lake Huron.

The switch sparked immediate complaints from residents who were alarmed by the brown, smelly water flowing from their kitchen faucets. Soon after, local doctors noticed a spike in children coming in with unexplained rashes and hair loss. After more than a year of complaints — and repeated reassurances from local and state officials — a Flint pediatrician presented blood tests that revealed an alarming increase in the number of toddlers with high levels of lead in their systems, which can cause permanent brain damage, since the water source switch.

The city was being poisoned.

It turns out that state regulators had failed to require Flint to properly treat the river water, which was more corrosive than the Lake Huron water the city used to pipe in. The corrosive water running through Flint's aging lead pipes caused the metal to leach into the city's tap water. Growing evidence of toxic water was ignored — some allege it was covered up — by state and local officials, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

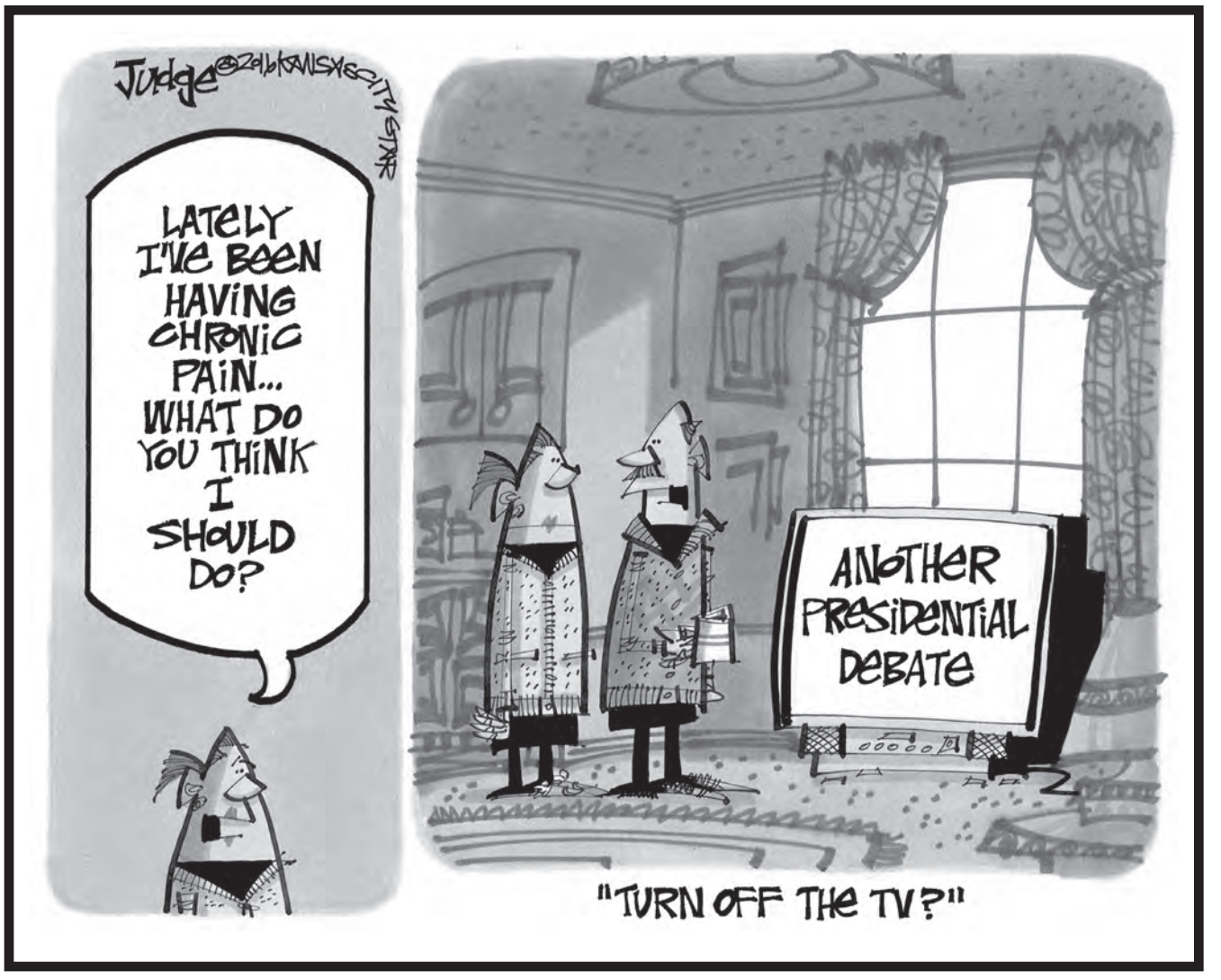
There has been plenty of blame to go around. In Michigan, it has stretched from the governor to the Genesee County drain commissioner.

Lead-contaminated water flowed for more than a year in Flint, which finally stopped sourcing its water from the river in October. The water flowing through the city's lead-leaching pipes is still considered undrinkable, though.

So much damage has been done it's difficult to determine which piece of this man-made disaster is most egregious.

Is it the original decision to tap the Flint River? Well, yes. That's what started this mess. As the Detroit News reported Thursday, emails released by the governor's office show a former state treasurer made "the ultimate decision" to let Flint leave

See UNNATURAL on Next Page



Triste Na Sentimentu

Ha gacha`yu` triste gi halom rimulinon umatotpe na sentimentu gi mabenden manadan tanu`natibu gi hilu` disision ni siha i manduenu solu siña dumispone.

Kumeke ileghu sumuha gi kanai niha ayu na tanu` petmanente `nai gi mismu tiempu hukomprende na siha tumuñgu` haf` gaige gi tatten pettan gima` niha.

Matai direchon niha muna` ma-atkila ta`lu mismu tanu` dispues de 55 años sa` petmanentemabende propiadat niha.Magahet na makat tali`e` haf` mamamaila` lau este na disision tutuhon dinisplantan natibuguine siha na islas. U hokog dispues i salape`, maliñgu propiadat niha ya siempre u fan man-atkila lugat fanliheñg familia gi propiadat otru tautau. Estague` masusede giya Guam. Masusesede pa`gu guine.

Ha danche i mamahan na kompania apusientun mangai tanu` sa` talulu` gi didog yan te`ugna tiempun chinatsaga. Ti siña ta entalu`e i mangai tanu` sa` propiadat niha. I mamamaila`yu`umestototba `nai kontodu kuttura-ta mafahan ni manfuetsudu na bisnis ginen hiyuñg. Guahamohon kampu para ta adahe este na kinalamten?

Asuntun Tautau-ta

Hu konbetsiasune un` lahihu nietu gi finu` Chamorro. Chumaleg ya ilegña na ti ha komprendehaf` hu sasañgan. Hu pasensiaye pot magahet na mas lagse` gi finu` Eñglis.

Esta i lahihu kuatru gradu ya puru entut na finu` Chamorro. Namase` `an para u dañkulu sinfitme na hila` nanaña. I primet finana`gue debi ginen halom guma`.

I maestra siha gi eskuela makomple che`chu` niha. Mantai obligasion umasegura namatuñgu` ni famaguon liñguahen niha. Este na obligasion gaige primera yan enteramente gi dossainan guma`.

Lastima sineyu` ma-abiban kuttura. I liñguahita uttimu sahyan natibu lau tayute` gi un` banda.I asuntu parehu yan un` guihan: gai ilu, tatautau yan dadalag. Gigon fatta un` patte puesmatulaika hechuran ennau na guihan.

By JOHN DELROSARIO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

I para ta sustene kuttura-ta gaige ennau gi dos patman kanai-ta. Guiya i fitme na pisu giineyag che`chu echu tautau. Gi todu karera-ta i kuttura kulan un` saina gi famaguon ni pumulansatton diaru gi kriniansan kustumbren tanu`. Gi uttimun ha`ane ha sede hit rumikohe tattehinasso-ta ya hana katma todu estotbo-ta. Ma`ug na pisu gi linala` natibu.

Pot Chaleg

Puru finu` Eñglis i famaguon diariu. De hemunos kau ha tuñgu` i bihan niha haf`masasañgan. Un` talo`ane man-estaba i famaguon man-a`tane` gi kattan guma`. Umesalau hulu`i biha, "Jun, Rodney, Maria, don't play in the katan guma` in da kareta come and chiniget youhekua` ti`u tuñgu`". Dios mihu!

Tres lalahen Chamorro marompe sagan biyat para u fan hugandu. Sessu i sindalunAmerikanu guihe na fina` lugat maneska. Ilegña i unu na `an guaha mamaisen kuestion po`lu yaguiya u oppe. Mafaisen finenina i dos "Do you wanna fight?" Ti ma-oppe. Mafaisen i paire. Gigonilegña "Yes" matrukus ya mana` tisu. `Nai man-mata gi sigiente oga`an kontodu antiña puti.A`saina!

Gi kotte, mafaisen i testigu haf` na kulot chinina ha u`usa i defendante, asut pat betde. Man-atan hulu` ya ilegña, "Huñgan". Marepite i kuestion lau i inipeña parehu, "huñgan". Madispensa.Probleman ti ume`ekuñgog. Muteru i defendante manlache siha na ineppe. Madispacha ni juesdispues. Dios tiampare!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

US-Iran relations unchanged

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by e-mail at trubin@phillynews.com.*

Now that the Iran nuclear deal is a done deal, what next?

More quickly than expected, Tehran has dismantled large portions of its nuclear program, leading to the lifting of the sanctions imposed on its nuclear activities. Contrary to the critics, this deal does make the Mideast safer—for now.

But it also raises the controversial question of whether the deal will trigger a broader shift in U.S.-Iranian relations. The quick release of 10 U.S. sailors who strayed into Iranian waters and a prisoner swap last week have been hailed by administration officials as the beginning of a new era in the relationship.

Would that this were true. But it's not.

"To me, this is a transactional relationship, not transformational, just like the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated pretty good arms agreements," says Ryan Crocker, a former ambassador to Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan who has experience negotiating with the Iranians.

The point is well taken: The nuclear accord is unlikely to improve the broader U.S.-Iranian relationship. On the contrary, it could get much worse.

"It's great that we have a phone number to call," Crocker told me in a phone interview. His reference was to the close relationship that has developed between Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, which some have taken to calling 1-800-Zarif. That relationship helped to quickly resolve the incident with the sailors and to finally obtain the release of Iranian-Americans, including Washington Post correspondent Jason Rezaian.

"But I don't see any sign that Iran is going to change its policies in the region," Crocker added. "We need to make it clear that this is not a bold new dawn."

Things might have been different if the foreign policy file were truly in the hands of Zarif, a sophisticated diplomat who did graduate studies in the United States. Or if his government boss, President Hassan Rouhani, had final say on foreign policy issues. Both men are patriots, eager to see their country prosper and resume its rightful place in the international order; they might have been more open to real negotiations, say, on resolving the Syrian conflict and stabilizing Iraq.

But the real power in Iran lies in the hands of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who made clear his continuing and intense distrust of Washington. Khamenei has emphasized that negotiations over the nuclear talks were unrelated to any other issues.

Moreover, the Iraq-Syria file is in the hands of Gen. Qasem Soleimani, the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, whose world view was shaped by Shiite Iran's decade-long war with Sunni Iraq, in which he served on the front lines. Saddam Hussein started that war, and was backed by Saudi Arabia and the United States.

That experience leaves Soleimani with little interest in the kind of political compromise between Shiites and Sunnis in Syria that would be necessary to end the fighting. Iran will not stop supporting Syrian dictator Bashar Assad (nor will it stop sending anti-Israel arms to its ally, Hezbollah, in Lebanon, via Damascus).

Thus, any administration hopes that a new relationship with Iran will translate into progress on shaky Syria peace talks are badly misplaced.

The same caution holds true in Iraq, where a Shiite-led government needs to make a place for the Sunni minority in the system if it wants to stabilize the country. Soleimani, and Iran's local Iraqi Shiite proxies, have blocked that approach.

None of this means the arms accord was a mistake (whether the terms or the enforcement mechanisms could have been tighter is another question). Iran was getting very close to breakout capacity — the point where it would have had enough fissile material for a bomb — which was a recipe for a war that very likely would have involved America. Iran's program has now been sharply curtailed for at least a decade.

But it does mean that the administration must stop giving the impression it will no longer stand up to malign Iranian behavior in the region because it fears jeopardizing the nuclear accord (most Arab Sunnis believe Washington has entered into an alliance with Tehran). It means the White House should back much tougher sanctions in response to recent — or any future — Iranian missile tests in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

It means that the United States should push back much harder against Iranian behavior that fuels sectarian war in the Mideast (the Saudis are guilty of this, too, but that doesn't excuse egregious behavior by Tehran).

"We should do what Iran does," says Crocker. "Iran is pushing in the region as if there were no nuclear agreement, and they don't seem worried that they will jeopardize it. We should do the same."

Sarah Palin has let me down

By CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS
Philadelphia Daily News

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News.

Sarah Palin has made me sad. That's something that I never thought would happen, particularly since I made a small cottage industry of defending her against pretentious liberals, particularly pretentious liberal women who know how to spell "fetus" and "choice" and a lot of words that only have four letters in them.

In fact, I still like her more than most of the ladies who defend Planned Parenthood against charges of baby vivisection, and I most definitely like her more than Hillary Clinton, who would probably respond, "What difference does it make?"

But I have gotten to the point where I'm no longer willing to sit quietly while she does something that makes my blood boil simply because she's a conservative, pro-life woman who manages to drive the progressive crazy. Yes, it's worth a smile and a high-five every time some tight-mouthed, pretentious feminist splutters in apoplexy about "Caribou Barbie." I can't deny that watching their compliant male counterparts insult Palin makes me even more determined to keep my nephew away from these Stepford Husbands, because God forbid he'd turn into one of those brainwashed idiots who doesn't think he's entitled to weigh in on whether his son or daughter will be born.

For years, Sarah's mere existence was a rebuttal to the concept of "abortion is a personal matter between a woman and her scheduling calendar."

And yet, there are a lot of pro-life women out there to admire and a lot of strong conservative females who, like Palin, advanced in their careers without the assistance of their husbands, but who don't carry the negative baggage that Alaska's former governor has acquired since she stunned the country with her magnificent rhetoric at the Republican National Convention in 2008.

That baggage was manageable for a very long while. I shouldered it willingly, because my loyalty to Palin transcended the person and extended to the principles that she represented. Sometimes, our standard bearers fall short in their personal lives and don't exactly live up to our ideals. Nonetheless, we forgive them their trespasses and keep our eye on the prize. In my case, the prize was showing the nation that women did not walk in lockstep behind the symbol of a bloody coat hanger, and that it was very possible to have an independent mind as well as a pair of ovaries.

But Sarah Palin has now become a liability to me and to so many conservative women who stood on her shoulders. The nail in the coffin was her recent endorsement of Donald Trump for the Republican nomination for president. It's not so much that I despise Trump, which I actually do. It's more that I expected an integrity from this woman that she clearly possesses but is apparently able to set aside when it suits her purposes, political, financial or otherwise.

I will never deny that she has integrity, because very few women would go ahead with a pregnancy knowing that their unborn child will be born with Down syndrome. To me, that is a symbol of humanity that makes Cecile Richards and her priestesses of "choice" look ghoulish and incredibly selfish. Nothing can diminish the magnificence of Palin's own "choice."

And yet, that alone is not enough to keep me silent and compliant when she endorses a man who has attacked the character of her former running mate, a flawed but undeniably heroic soldier-statesman who launched her into the public consciousness. Without John McCain, Palin would be inaugurating ceremonial salmon runs in Alaska, not commanding hundreds of thousands of dollars for books and speeches and television programs.

I'd expect a man who says the Bible is his favorite book but then makes a mockery of its contents ("Two Corinthians"? Really?) to make unsubstantiated, random attacks on those he sees as lesser beings. It's not surprising that a man who talks about family values but has children with three different women (two of whom are not natural born citizens) would have no problem ridiculing the one true, pure thing that stands apart in the life of an otherwise complicated man. No one has ever argued that John McCain was a saint. Many conservatives feel betrayed by his positions on immigration and campaign finance and a host of other issues, and an equal number of liberals won't forgive him for running against the first black president.

But no true American questions his character. Let me repeat that: No true American questions the character of a man who carries within him, in his battered body and solitary mind, the hell of Hanoi. That's why Trump doesn't even reach that threshold qualification for national leadership: He's a small and nasty man, to use a phrase he'd understand.

And Palin, of all people, should know that. Here is what she said in Minnesota on that memorable September night seven years ago: "There is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for you … in places where winning means survival and defeat means death. And that man is John McCain. … In our day, politicians have readily shared much lesser tales of adversity than the nightmare world … in which this man, and others equally brave, served and suffered for their country. And it's a long way from the fear and pain and squalor of a 6-by-4 cell in Hanoi to the Oval Office. But if Sen. McCain is elected president, that is the journey he will have made."

I heard her speak those words, sitting at my kitchen table, mesmerized. I fell in love with her that night.

Perhaps that was my problem, believing that the words spoken by a person under the bright glare of adulation reflect the true character of the speaker. For me, this was a woman in whom I could place my hopes and expectations.

The passing years diminished, by small increments, my affection. They never, however, destroyed it. And to this day, I love the Sarah Palin that burst like a supernova into the political firmament all those years ago.

But now, with her embrace of a man who ridiculed the POW who made her possible, I'm forced to question my judgment, and her motives. And that makes me sad beyond belief.

UNNATURAL

From Page 10

the Detroit water system, acting on a request from Flint officials.

But the cascade of red flags, bad decisions and government inaction since then has endangered tens of thousands of people and is expected to cost the state more than $1.5 billion to fix.

Angry residents say Snyder should've acted sooner to address health concerns and ensure Flint had safe water. The governor didn't publicly acknowledge the problem until October, more than a year after the first complaints.

Relief is coming, slowly, to the people of Flint, who have become dependent on bottled and filtered water for bathing, cooking and drinking — an unheard-of way of life in the United States, where clean, potable water is expected. In recent weeks, the state has stepped up efforts to help Flint. The National Guard is distributing clean water. The Obama administration granted $5 million in federal emergency funding, but denied the governor's request for a more sweeping federal disaster declaration.

The most damning lesson from the emails released by the governor is that for months no one at any level of government owned this disaster. No one created a sense of urgency to save Flint. It was too convenient to think of it as someone else's responsibility, until it was too late. Until the adults and children of Flint had lead coursing through their bodies.

"I'm sorry most of all that I let you down," Snyder said Tuesday, so heartfelt, and so appallingly late.

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The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.
▲86° ▼74°

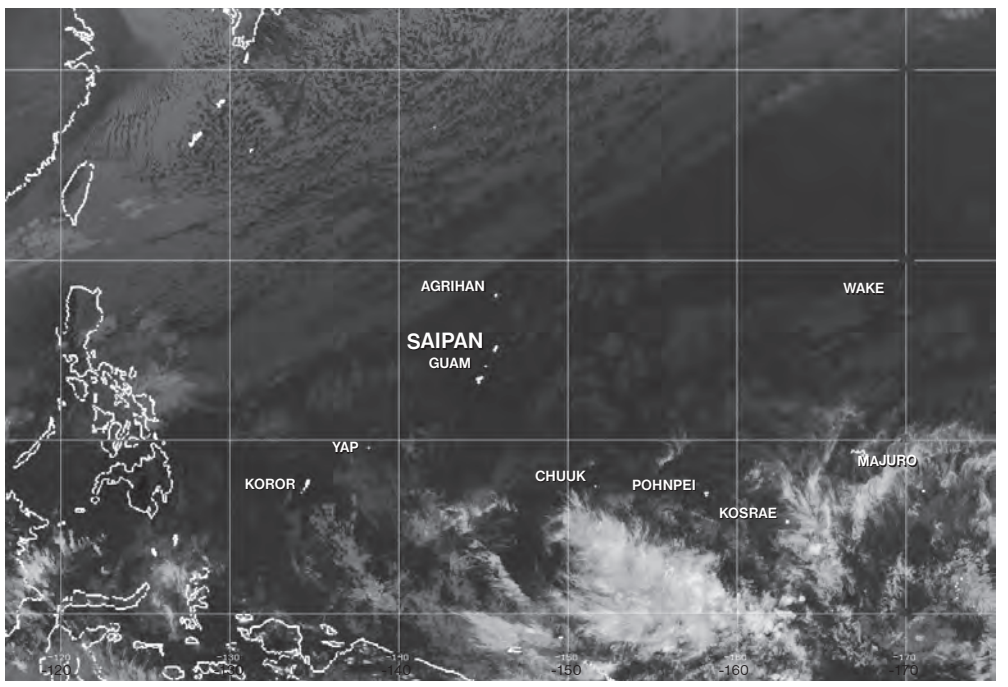
WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.
▲86° ▼74°

THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼74°

FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼73°

SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼73°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 12:30 PM, MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from near Minami Tori Shima at 25N156E to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. Converging trade winds are generating scattered showers southeast of Koror and Yap within 70 miles of a line from 5N142E to 5N145E to 9N148E and south of a line from 2N136E to 1N150E. Heavier showers and isolated thunderstorms are found south of Chuuk and Pohnpei south of a line from 6N151E to 1N164E. A near-equatorial trough curves east-northeastward from a weak circulation centered near EQ172E to near 3N179E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present southeast of Kosrae and south of Majuro within 120 miles of a line from 3N165E to 6N170E to 7N180 and near Tarawa south of a line from 2N171E to 3N176E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Showers	▲84	▼78
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼80
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼68
Beijing	Sunny	▲34	▼ 9
Hong Kong	Showers	▲56	▼52
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼69
London	Showers	▲54	▼52
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲71	▼47
Manila	Windy	▲85	▼72
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼62
Miami	Cloudy	▲72	▼65
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲39	▼32
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲47	▼38
Paris	Cloudy	▲50	▼49
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼29
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼42
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲56	▼44
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲60	▼49
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲39	▼20
Tokyo	Sunny	▲50	▼32
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲36	▼31

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:11 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.2 Feet
9:53 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
3:45 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
8:42 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:14 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:06 PM	8:03 AM
Wednesday	8:55 PM	8:45 AM
Thursday	9:42 PM	9:25 AM
Friday	10:29 PM	10:03 AM
Saturday	11:16 PM	10:41 AM

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

MU7162	5:10am	08:00am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

MU7161	10:00 pm	5:30am	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Jakiir Barcinas wants a life of service

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy," said Indian Nobel Prize Laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

And this quote could very well sum up Jakiir Barcinas' present condition after the 16-year-old had been busy doing volunteer work for the past five months now, helping in Saipan's recovery efforts from Typhoon Soudelor.

"I've lost count on how many cleanups that I've joined and I've been all over the island. I just like serving and helping others in their recovery efforts. I find joy and satisfaction whenever I'm helping people, especially the poor," Barcinas said.

"That's the same reason why after graduation I'm entering the U.S. Marine Corps. I want to help people," added Barcinas, who wants to join humanitarian missions once he finishes with his training.

He again joined Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts, representatives from Best Sunshine International, Ltd. and other youth volunteers in another cleanup last Saturday where they covered two areas—Koblerville and Chalan Piao.

He said that their house in Garapan, on the street just across the 13 Fishermen Monument, suffered minimal damage when Soudelor was battering Saipan with only his father's room having leaks. One of their neighbors, however, wasn't fortunate and lost their home.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jakiir Barcinas has been part of the Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts' post Typhoon Soudelor cleanup since the first day.

"During the typhoon I helped one of our neighbors whose house was flooded inside. Then after the typhoon, I volunteered with the American Red Cross where we packed relief goods in the warehouse. I learned that one friend of mine was going to volunteer in the cleanup efforts so I decided to join," added the Marianas High School sophomore.

Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts director Jenny Hegland has praised Barcinas' commitment and attitude since the first day of the cleanup in October.

"[Saturday] is our 24th cleanup and he's been helping us since Day 1. That's why I specially mentioned him during CARE's [Tuesday] meeting. He never missed one even though he doesn't have his own car, that's why either me or someone from the group always picks him up," added Hegland.

Barcinas, who'll be graduating in 2018, said he would start his basic training at the CNMI Army Reserve Center in Puerto Rico before moving to Guam for another three months of training where he would then await his deployment.

Barcinas is a member of MHS' Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps with the rank of Sgt. 1st Class. He is also the commander for the Dolphins' Exhibition Drill Team.

Sister Remedios to hold 8th Annual Walkathon

Parents, students, and teachers at Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center are revving up for the 8th Annual Sister Remedios Memorial Walkathon this coming Saturday, Jan. 30.

In addition to promoting healthy living at such a young age, the walkathon is one of the most important fundraisers for the school. Last year's walkathon was a huge success, bringing over $7,000.

This year, the school is offering several incentives to motivate participants. According to Sister Remedios principal, Bennet Seman, "for every $25 worth of pledges students will get a ticket for raffle drawings." She added, "students who bring in $25 worth of pledges will also get a souvenir T-shirt, and the student who raises the most pledges will be awarded a special prize."

This year's walkathon is made possible by generous support from parents and members of the community, including the Commonwealth Health Corporation Awareness Program, JC Tenorio Enterprises, and the Office of Representative B.J. Attao.

The walkathon will start at the Minachom Atdao Pavilion, and registration starts at 3:30pm this Saturday. Seman noted that it's not too late to support the 8th Annual Sister Remedios Walkathon. To make pledges, or to learn how you can help, call the school at 234-6247. ***(PR)***

SSHS alumnus makes it to BSU Dean's List

Jonathan M. DeLeon Guerrero, a Civil Engineering student at Boise State University, was recently included in the Dean's List for the Fall 2015 semester.

Amy J. Moll, dean of BSU's College of Engineering, extended her congratulatory remarks on Jan. 5, 2016 noting "Based on your Fall 2015 grades, you earned honors in your Civil Engineering program. This achievement merits your inclusion in the College of Engineering Dean's List and will also appear on your official transcript. I applaud your commitment to academic excellence as evidenced by your personal achievement, and my best wishes on your continued success."

DeLeon Guerrero

DeLeon Guerrero is a 2013 graduate of the Saipan Southern High School. He attended the Northern Marianas College from the Fall 2013 to Spring 2015, where he majored in Natural Resource Management. He transferred to BSU in the Fall 2015 Semester to pursue his Civil Engineering degree. He is the son of Ed DeLeon Guerrero and Antonieta Magbanua of San Vicente Village, Saipan. ***(PR)***

Nominations open for the 2016 Businesswoman of the Year

MAITE, Guam—First Hawaiian Bank and *Guam Business Magazine* are seeking nominations for the 11th Annual Businesswoman of the Year Maga'håga award. Nominees must be residents of Guam or the Northern Mariana Islands.

Nominees should meet the following criteria: a businesswoman who has made a significant difference in her industry through her organization or her business, a woman who has contributed to her community, a woman who is a leading representative of her profession or field, and a woman who displays the best qualities of one in business.

Nominations must be submitted by Feb. 5. The winner will be announced at the Businesswoman of the Year Gala on April 30.

The Gala is also a fundraiser for the Businesswoman of the Year scholarship program. The scholarships, open to both full-time and part-time college students, are intended to promote higher education by providing financial assistance to college students pursuing professional careers in business or a related field who are enrolled at the University of Guam, Guam Community College or Northern Marianas College.

Previous Businesswoman of the Year Maga'håga award recipients include Joann G. Camacho, director of market development, DFS Guam (2015); Shirley Ann T. Sablan, executive vice president and general manager of Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc. (2014); F. Marie Calvo-Monge, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Producer of Pacific Telestations Inc. which operates the stations of KUAM (2013); Mary P. Rhodes, president of the Guam Hotel & Restaurant Association and President of MARQ Consulting Services (2012); Joyce Quinata Crisostomo, executive director of Cars Plus and President of Payless Car Rental (2011); Anna Wang Kao, founder and president of Genghis Khan Furniture Co. (2010); Lorraine S. Okada, president and owner of Managing Consulting Services (2009); Julienne Rose Perez Duenas, physical therapist, owner and clinical director of Sports, Orthopedic and Active Rehabilitation Inc. (2008); Christine Won Pat Baleto, general manager of Market Wholesale Distributors (2007); and Katherine C. Sgro, executive vice president and chairwoman of the board for Pay-Less Markets Inc. (2006).

For more information or to submit a nomination, contact Joy White, assistant editor, Guam Business Magazine at (671) 649-0883 ext. 125 or assist_editor@glimpsesofguam.com, or Barbie Jane Agahan, assistant advertising manager, First Hawaiian Bank at (671) 475-7908 or bagahan@fhb.com. ***(PR)***

Applications for Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants sought

HILO, Hawaii—U.S. Department of Agriculture State Director for Hawaii and the Western Pacific Chris Kanazawa announced today that the Rural Development Agency is soliciting applications for the Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants. Qualified applicants are encouraged to apply. Pre-applications are due by 5pm on April 12 to the Hawaii State Office.

The Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Programs provide affordable financing for the development of housing for domestic farm laborers. Housing may be constructed in rural and urban areas with a demonstrated need. Qualified applicants include: farmers, associations of both farmers and farmworkers, family farm corporations, federally-recognized tribes, nonprofit organizations, and most state and local governmental entities.

Approved applicants receive a 1 percent fixed rate with up to a 33-year payback period. Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pre-application packages may be obtained from and submitted to:

USDA Rural Development
Room 311, Federal Building
154 Waianuenue Ave.
Hilo, HI 96720
Telephone: (808) 933-8300

Further information on USDA Rural Development Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants Programs is available at any local office and on page 1611 of the January 13, 2016, Federal Register.

President Obama's plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities. Under the President's leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way-strengthening America's economy, small towns and rural communities.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users). ***(USDA)***

'Training key to making Math easier'

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Agape Christian School MathCourt coach Frederick Guintu believes a methodical approach is needed in learning and understanding how to solve problems of one of the most dreaded subjects in school.

"There's no secret to it. You just need consistent training and practice to understand the problems so you could solve them," said Guintu, who is also ACS' Mathematics teacher in middle school and high school.

"Our students here started at an average level of their math skills while they are still in elementary. Slowly they developed their skills thanks to everyday practice of giving them MathCourt problems to solve," added Guintu.

Guintu moved to Saipan in 2010 and become ACS' math teacher the following year. ACS opened in 2005 and its students had been one of the consistent finalists in the annual CNMI MathCourt competitions since Guintu joined its faculty in 2011.

He is now training ACS elementary (10am to 11:30am) and middle school (12:30pm to pm) students separately in time for their respective elimination rounds for the 2016 MathCourt season early this year. Middle school starts on Jan. 30.

Last year, seven from ACS and one from Eucon were part of Team CNMI that went to the finals in set from June 4 to 11. This year, three from ACS made it to the six-member CNMI MathCourt squad with three more as alternates.

ACS senior Bei Bei Chen, an alternate last season, topped the CNMI finals of the high school division held last week at the Saipan Southern High School with each Claire Song and Allan Zhao placing third and fourth.

Marianas High School's B. Masrur Alam finished second behind Chen while Saipan International School's Myung Jae Cho and Jaehoon Jang placed fifth and six, respectively. The seventh to 12th placers are the alternates with En Jie Hu, Andrea Feng and Rebecca Xu also from Agape.

Even Guintu's oldest son, Frederick Dean Michael, has become a member of ACS' MathCourt team and has represented the CNMI in the nationals since the fourth grade. Now in middle school, he was the CNMI champion while in elementary and in 2015 joined the team to the finals for being the Commonwealth's champion as a sixth grader.

JON PEREZ
Agape Christian School MathCourt coach Frederick Guintu, right, poses with CNMI MathCourt champion Bei Bei Chen.

Guintu is a licensed mechanical engineer, finishing his Bachelor of Science degree at the Don Honorio Ventura Technological State University in Bacolor, Pampanga in Central Luzon in the Philippines. He worked as a design engineer for a private company in Saudi Arabia for 15 years before moving to Saipan to join his family.

4 Pacific cultural businesses to exhibit in NY trade show

SUVA, Fiji—For the first time ever, four small businesses from the Pacific will join 500 companies from around the globe in showcasing their products at the Winter 2016 Artisan Resources @ NYNOW Tradeshow in the United States of America, when it opens at the end of this month.

Plantation House (Samoa), Nautilus Books & Gifts (Solomon Islands), Sigavou Studios (Fiji), and Rise Beyond The Reef (Fiji) have been selected to participate at the event, following a competitive process involving over 50 applications from Fiji, Samoa, and Solomon Islands.

Plantation House is a home décor, accessories, and fashion business using hand printed elei fabric infused with Pacific inspired designs. The designer and owner behind Plantation House is Marita Wendt.

Nautilus Books & Gifts is a retail and wholesale business in Solomon Islands that specializes in high quality Solomon Islands carving, buka ware baskets, and shell money jewellery. Nautilus is owned and managed by husband and wife team, Naomi Tozaka and Richard Majchrzak.

Sigavou Studios, run by Fijian artist Maria Rova, creates original, hand-painted artwork on Fijian masi (barkcloth) made by women from Ekubu village on the remote island of Vatulele in Southern Fiji. Maria works with a team of young emerging artists and studio technicians who assist with the design and production of hand-painted limited edition art on barkcloth and silk.

Rise Beyond the Reef, a Fijian non-profit, works with rural women through their Traditional Contemporary Arts & Crafts Income Generating Program. The program provides rural remote women with an opportunity to practice their traditional skills and earn a sustainable income to support their families.

The opportunity to showcase Pacific-made creative art in a new market is made possible with the financial support of the European Union and the assistance of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States through the "Enhancing the Pacific Cultural Industries: Fiji, Samoa and Solomon Islands" project.

The project is managed by the Pacific Community in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Fiji Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts, Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and Solomon Islands Ministry of Culture and Tourism along with the Fiji Arts Council, Samoa Arts Council, and Solomon Islands Arts Alliance.

The trade mission aims to develop the profile of Pacific cultural producers in the international market while exposing selected enterprises to international market trends, buyer demands and export distribution expectations.

The Pacific trade mission to New York is being implemented in partnership with ByHand Consulting, a U.S.-based consulting firm that is a key advisor to Artisan Resource.

ByHand supported SPC and PIFS in the selection process and have provided critical guidance to the selected businesses in preparation for the show. The company will also run a pre-show e-marketing campaign and assist with buyer meetings during the event.

The Artisan Resources @ NYNOW Tradeshow will take place in New York from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3, 2016. The popular tradeshow is held twice a year in New York City and attracts over 30,000 buyers from over 80 countries.

More information on the tradeshow can be found at www.nynow.com/handmade/artisan-resource/. ***(SPC)***

Seminar to discuss Chamorro who fought in Battle in Normandy

MANGILAO, Guam—Father Duenas Memorial School student Lazaro Quinata and his teacher, Tony Blas, spent a year researching the life of Francisco N.F. Blas—the one person from Guam to fight in the infamous World War II D-Day battle in Normandy, France. As part of the MARC Seminar Series, on January 28, 2016 at 5:30pm in the University of Guam CLASS Lecture Hall, Quinata and Tony Blas will share their research and their experiences as one of 15 student-teacher teams selected by the Normandy Institute to engage in a rigorous study of D-Day and World War II.

The student-teacher pair participated in a scholarly study of the war memorials in the Washington, D.C. area, and walked the beaches of Normandy. They were also able to lay a wreath at Francisco Blas' grave marker, where Quinata delivered a eulogy to honor his life. "It is no easy task to prepare a eulogy for a man I have never met," Quinata expressed in the eulogy. "But I hope that the words I speak may do him justice as he has made such an immense impact on my life and I sincerely hope that through my words, he may too make one on yours."

At the seminar, Quinata and Blas will discuss the life of Francisco Blas, who was enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served in World War II. He perished aboard the USS *Rich* two days after D-Day commenced.

For more information please contact LaVonne Guerrero-Meno at (671)735-2150 or lavonneg@triton.uog.edu. ***(PR)***

Temporary water service interruption for Puerto Rico

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in portions of Puerto Rico and Garapan will experience a temporary water service interruption Tuesday as Engineering and Operations personnel investigate a possible rupture in the 16-inch main distribution line.

Customers along Chalan Pale Arnold from Shell Puerto Rico to Micro Beach Road, south Garapan, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the Port of Saipan, and Lower Navy Hill will experience a temporary service interruption Tuesday morning at 9am when CUC Water Operations personnel begin excavating the site of the suspected leak.

Motorists are urged to take precautions while driving in the area as CUC Water personnel will close one lane of traffic during the excavation and subsequent pipeline repairs. While CUC is unable to offer an exact time for the completion of the project, repair and replacement work is expected to be completed by the end of the day with the resumption of regular water service to resume Wednesday morning.

For more information, contact the 24-hour CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/).

CUC is a non-profit autonomous agency of the CNMI government. The utility provides electric power, water and wastewater services to the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. ***(PR)***

Torres to address SHRM at its first 2016 meeting

The Society for Human Resource Management CNMI Chapter is honored to host Gov. Ralph DLG Torres as special guest speaker at its first general membership meeting of 2016 on Thursday, Jan. 28.

Torres will address issues related to the planned 902 consultations with the federal government, what the human resource community can expect in the upcoming year, relative to jobs, immigration issues, the workforce, workforce training opportunities, the looming manpower shortage with the anticipated casinos and other development, and other employment and human resource related topics. The governor will also provide an opportunity for questions from the audience.

This special meeting will be held on Jan. 28, at Charley's Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, from 11:30am to 1:30pm and will include lunch at a cost of $20 for SHRM members and $30 for non-members.

Seats are limited and can be reserved by contacting Pina Deleon Guerrero by phone at 236-8873 or by e-mail at pdlguerrero@laolaobaygolf.com or by e-mail to Frank Gibson at flgibson@yahoo.com.

SHRM Chapter members, other HR professionals, managers, and the general public are invited to come and enjoy this special presentation by the Commonwealth's new governor.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. The society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, and more than 575 affiliated chapters. The SHRM NMI Chapter is affiliated with the national organization. For more information about the SHRM NMI Chapter, visit their website at http://nmi-chapter.shrm.org. ***(SHRM)***

Business

Weekend storm economic hit not as bad as feared

AP
Daron Anderson walks down an empty snow-covered street to check on the condition of a relative, Friday, Jan. 22, 2016, in Nashville, Tenn.

The weekend blizzard along the East Coast could have a relatively small economic impact—up to $850 million, experts estimate—because the storm hit on a weekend and there weren't any major power outages. That meant there was little lost productivity in government and business.

Restaurants, theaters, other entertainment venues and some retailers took the brunt of the hit, but overall, the impact might be a wash, said Chris Christopher, a U.S. macroeconomist at data firm IHS Global Insight.

He said that's because many businesses will have made extra money, or at least made sales a little sooner, from people stocking up in advance on food, gasoline, alcohol, shovels, ice-melt and other items. Some spending may just be delayed, like purchases of cars, houses, major appliances and even boots and warm clothing as people realize winter has finally set in. And people whose homes or cars were damaged in the storm will be buying supplies or paying for repairs in the near future.

Other spending likely shifted around. For example, malls and movie theaters were closed over the weekend, but people had other options.

"After they did their shoveling," Christopher said, "they could be online shopping or ordering movies" via Netflix or cable on-demand services.

Christopher said the economic impact could be as little as $350 million or as much as $850 million, based on the costs of past storms, but hard data won't be available until next month, when various types of economic data for January are released.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, noted airlines and others in the transportation industry lost money, though they expect at least one big storm every winter.

"Winners include those involved in the cleanup, including government workers and private contractors," Zandi wrote in an email.

"If the storm had struck during the work week, it would have done some economic damage," he wrote, adding that the economy of the region affected by the storm produces $16 billion in output per day.

Workers paid by the hour, rather than on salary, will be hurt by lost wages and may have less money to spend, particularly those in service industries who work on weekends. But convenience stores that were able to stay open—in areas where customers could get to them—also benefited from having little or no competition.

RETAIL IMPACT

Planalytics, which helps companies assess and address how weather impacts their business, is estimating that retailers could see a net loss of $850 million.

"Some retailers might have seen a bump just ahead of the storm, but this will be more than offset by the fact that two weekend days of business were washed out or significantly slowed due to the storm," according to its president, Scott A. Bernhardt.

Bernhardt noted that nationwide, sales of coats, hats, gloves, scarves and boots were all up by about one-fourth last week because of the cooler weather then, after an unseasonably warm December. Meanwhile, some lost retail sales will be made up later, he wrote, but not all of them.

"You don't eat dinner out twice next weekend because you didn't have your usual Saturday night out or buy two cups of coffee because you missed your regular daily stop one day," he noted.

For instance, in Washington, D.C., most neighborhood Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts outlets were still closed Sunday afternoon.

TRANSPORTATION

Businesses involving transportation were mostly shut down over the weekend, but were getting back on their feet late Sunday. The top four airlines, which handle more than 80 percent of U.S. air traffic, resumed at least some service Sunday afternoon and were aiming to be nearly at a full schedule Monday.

However, that wasn't looking likely in a few areas, particularly the hard-hit Washington, D.C., region.

Because the airlines waived fees for changing flights, some people traveled earlier than planned. Others pushed back their trips, meaning flights early this week are likely to be even more packed than usual.

Amtrak was operating Sunday on all its routes, but with a reduced number of trains. It will continue a modified schedule between Boston and Washington Monday, with reduced service between Washington and points in Virginia. Other service between Washington and the Southeast and Midwest remains under review.

DELIVERY SERVICES

UPS, which has limited deliveries on Saturday and Sunday, had operations interrupted in Washington, D.C., and parts of 13 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

UPS spokesman Steve Gaut said it will restore pickup and delivery service Monday where streets have been cleared, adding its teams were assessing road conditions and implementing contingency plans to help ensure shipments arrive quickly as conditions permit. Monday's deliveries would be processed in its hubs and package centers Sunday evening.

FedEx said in a statement that it will provide service in areas that are accessible, but that customers may experience delays in areas still affected by the snowfall.

When interviewing, word choice matters

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics*. Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @ officecoach.*

Q: I am very confused about some feedback I received while looking for a job. After staying home with my children for eight years, I am planning to resume my teaching career. I applied for positions at two schools in the same district and had interviews with both principals.

At the end of these meetings, the two principals told me exactly the same thing. They said my answers included too many first-person responses, using "I" instead of "we." I did not get an offer from either school. How should I interpret this feedback?

A: Screening applicants based on pronoun choice is ridiculous, so I understand your concern. Because such semantics are a poor predictor of actual job performance, giving them that much weight is simply foolish.

If this only happened once, I would assume you encountered a bad interviewer. If it occurred in different districts, I might suspect something odd in your answers. But when two managers in the same organization take the same peculiar approach, one possible culprit is their training.

So here's my theory. Because many schools are now using a team-oriented teaching strategy, the principals may have been taught to look for applicants who are more collaborative. In these sessions, the trainers could have mentioned the use of "we" versus "I" as one sign of a team-oriented person.

While there could be some truth to this, it is certainly not sufficient evidence on which to base a hiring decision. Instead, managers should formulate questions about actual work situations which require collaboration. However, your two interviewers may have fixated on the pronouns as an easy shortcut.

For your own benefit, you might as well consider whether there is anything to be learned here. Before your next interview, examine your typical responses to be sure they don't sound self-centered. And if you apply to any other schools in that district, choose your pronouns very carefully.

Q: For some reason, my manager seems to have made me a target. "Doug" frequently checks my work for errors and insists that I follow specific procedures. I don't believe he does this with my co-workers. I have been with this company a long time, and I know what I'm doing. How can I get Doug to back off?

A: Based on your description, I can envision two possible scenarios. One possibility is that you and Doug simply have different opinions about how this job should be performed. The other is that you are actually doing shoddy work. Either way, the bottom line is that he apparently feels the need to supervise you closely.

If you and Doug view the job differently, then you should make a convincing case for your own approach. You may not prevail, but at least you can try. But if you are taking unapproved shortcuts and making frequent mistakes, you need to shape up and meet the standards.

The cold, hard reality is that Doug is your boss, which makes him responsible for overseeing your work. So if you want him to "back off," try making a concerted effort to meet his expectations.

Major East Coast airports slowly resume service

Airports in New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore were resuming very limited service Sunday, a day after a punishing blizzard dumped two feet or more of snow and brought transportation to a standstill along the East Coast.

Other airports along the track of Winter Storm Jonas were doing better, with near-normal service. The major airlines intended to resume service at all airports throughout the region by Monday, though more than 800 flights have been canceled for then.

Along with clearing snow and ice from their own facilities and equipment, airlines and train operators were dealing with how to get all their snowbound employees to work.

Amtrak was operating Sunday on all its routes, but with a reduced number of trains. Spokesman Marc Magliari said Sunday afternoon that the number of passengers was down from usual, but appeared to include many travelers who couldn't get around on other transportation modes.

"We're seeing a pretty solid increase in ridership as the day has gone on," he said.

Amtrak said it will continue a modified schedule between Boston and Washington Monday, with reduced service between Washington and points in Virginia. Other service between Washington and the Southeast and Midwest remains under review.

More than 12,000 flights were canceled from Friday through Tuesday as states from New England to North Carolina wrestled with the massive snow dump. All told, 3,505 flights scheduled for Sunday, 865 flights for Monday and 50 flights for Tuesday have been cancelled according to flight tracking service FlightAware. With 3,100 flights failing to take off Friday and 4,511 being grounded on Saturday, the total of flights grounded was 12,031 for the five-day period.

Around 1,000 flights were delayed Sunday, FlightAware said.

Nation

East Coast, emerging from blizzard, faces difficult commute

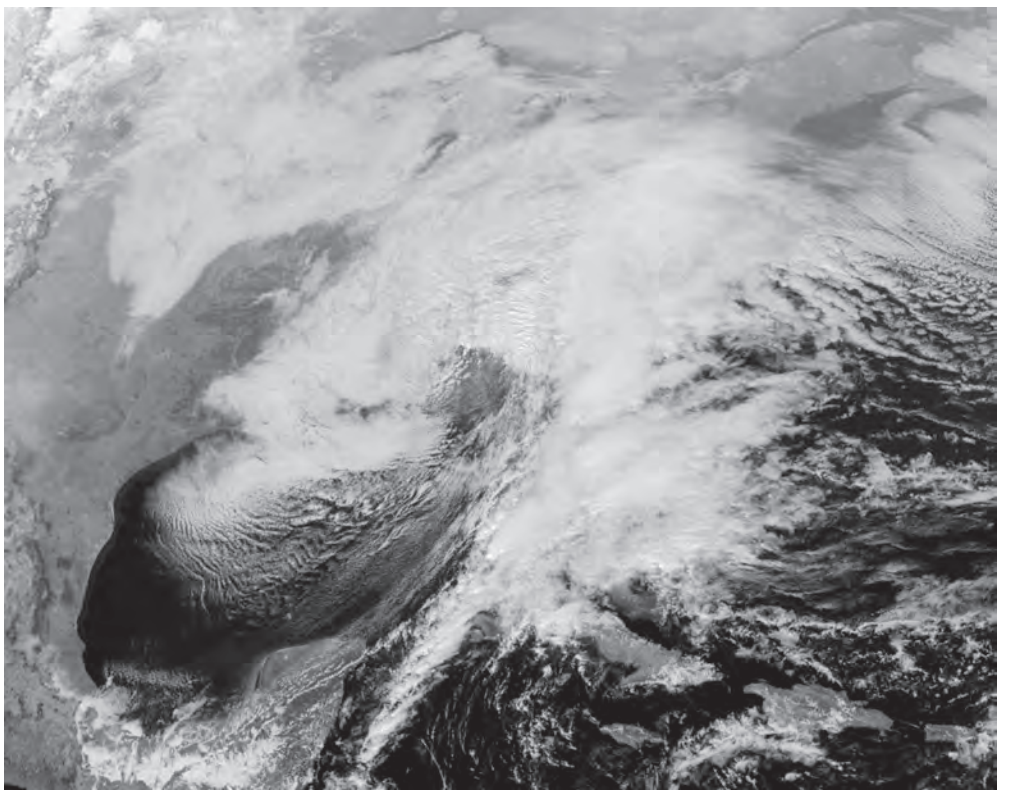
NEW YORK (AP)—After a weekend of sledding, snowboarding and staying put, the blizzard-blanketed Eastern U.S. will confront a Monday commute slowed by slick roads, damaged transit lines and endless mounds of snow.

Authorities cautioned against unnecessary driving, airline schedules were in disarray and commuter trains will be delayed or canceled for many as the work week begins after a storm that dumped near record snows on the densely populated Washington, D.C. to New York City corridor.

The last flakes fell just before midnight Saturday, but crews raced the clock all day Sunday to clear streets and sidewalks devoid of their usual bustle.

Ice chunks plunging from the roofs of tall buildings menaced people who ventured out in Philadelphia and New York. High winds on Manhattan's Upper West Side kept the snow from entirely swallowing the tiny Mini Cooper of Daniel Bardman, who nervously watched for falling icicles as he dug out.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio encouraged people to leave their plowed-in cars



AP

This image taken by NOAA's GOES-East satellite on Friday, Jan, 22, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. EST, and released by NASA, shows a winter snowstorm over the east coast of the United States.

Source: The Weather Channel
Graphic: Staff, TNS

covered with snow all week after a one-day record of 26.6 inches fell in Central Park.

That advice came too late for Bob Raldiris, who tried shoveling his Nissan Maxima out of a spot in Ridgewood, Queens, before passing plows and trucks spoiled his labor. "This is terrible," he said, pointing to a pile of snow three feet high.

Sunday's brilliant sunshine and gently rising temperatures provided a respite from the blizzard that paralyzed Washington and dropped a record 29.2 inches on Baltimore. The weekend timing could not have been better, enabling many to enjoy a gorgeous winter day.

It was just right for a huge snowball fight in Baltimore, where more than 600 people responded to organizer Aaron Brazell's invite on Facebook.

"I knew people would be cooped up in their houses and wanting to come outside," said Brazell, who was beaned by multiple blasts of perfectly soft but firm snow.

But treacherous conditions remained as people recovered from a storm that dropped snow from the Gulf Coast to New England. At least 30 deaths were blamed on the weather, with shoveling snow and breathing carbon monoxide collectively claiming almost as many lives as car crashes.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike reopened Sunday afternoon near Pittsburgh after more than 500 cars, trucks and buses—some carrying the Duquesne University men's basketball team and the Temple University women's gymnastics squad—got stuck Friday night. The huge backup happened after trucks couldn't climb through the mountains toward the Allegheny tunnels in what would become 35 inches of snow.

But one day of sunshine wasn't enough to clear many other roads. Federal offices were closed Monday, and Virginia's state workers were told to stay home. Schools from Washington to the Jersey Shore gave students Monday off; In the D.C. suburbs, classes also were canceled for Tuesday.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority said on Sunday evening that almost all mass transit services will be running in time for the morning rush hour, including nearly 80 percent of the Long Island Rail Road.

Broadway reopened after going dark at the last minute during the snowstorm, but museums remained closed in Washington, and the House of Representatives postponed votes until February, citing the storm's impact on travel.

Problems in Detroit, Flint show rift over emergency managers

DETROIT (AP)—Darnell Earley didn't come up with the plan to channel corrosive river water into Flint's old lead-lined water pipes, causing a health emergency. And he certainly can't be blamed for the Detroit school system's decaying facilities and wrecked finances, which have prompted teacher boycotts this month.

But the 64-year-old budget expert was in charge of Flint's city government and the Detroit schools at key points in their recent turmoil, and that has made him a focal point of anger about Gov. Rick Snyder's use of "emergency managers" to temporarily run public entities in Michigan that are hopelessly in debt.

Earley, who had a 40-year career in public administration in Michigan, was one of seven outside controllers appointed in the last five years to fix foundering cities or school districts, and he was clearly one of Snyder's go-to guys, getting two of the toughest cases in Flint and the Detroit schools.

In October 2013, he took over control of Flint, a majority black city of 100,000 north of Detroit where more than 40 percent of the population was below the poverty line. He was the third of four managers sent in to cut costs and deal with the city's $13 million deficit.

Earley seemed like a perfect fit for the blue-collar city. He grew up as one of nine children in an African-American family in Muskegon Heights, a small community along Lake Michigan, the son of an auto factory worker and a homemaker. He worked his way through college at Grand Valley State University and earned a master's degree in public administration from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

He also knew Flint. He worked as city administrator in 2001 and served a short stint as Flint's temporary mayor in 2002, as part of a career that also included a stint as city manager in Saginaw.

However, the personal connections didn't defuse the tension in seizing control of all fiscal decisions from locally elected officials.

"They don't listen to nobody," longtime Flint City Councilman Scott Kincaid said of emergency managers. "They don't care about the community. They just care about fixing the finances." Kincaid and others said the managers' tendency to ignore local complaints played a role in the water fiasco, since residents had complained about taste and color of the water.

Magnitude-7.1 quake jolts Alaska; 4 homes lost

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—A magnitude-7.1 quake knocked items off shelves and walls in Alaska early Sunday morning, jolting the nerves of residents in this earthquake-prone region. There were no reports of injuries, but four homes were lost to explosions or fire following the quake.

Alaska's state seismologist, Michael West, called it the strongest earthquake in the state's south-central region in decades. Alaska often has larger or more powerful earthquakes, such as a 7.9 last year in the remote Aleutian Islands.

"However, last night's earthquake is significant because it was close enough to Alaska's population centers," West said, adding that aftershocks could continue for weeks.

The earthquake was widely felt by Anchorage residents. But the Anchorage and Valdez police departments said they hadn't received any reports of injury or significant damage.

The earthquake struck at about 1:30 a.m. Alaska time and was centered 53 miles west of Anchor Point in the Kenai Peninsula, which is about 160 miles southwest of Anchorage, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Vincent Nusunginya, 34, of Kenai said he was at his girlfriend's house when the quake hit.

"It started out as a shaking and it seemed very much like a normal earthquake. But then it started to feel like a normal swaying, like a very smooth side-to-side swaying," said Nusunginya, director of audience at the Peninsula Clarion newspaper. "It was unsettling. Some things got knocked over, but there was no damage."

Two homes in Kenai were destroyed in gas leak explosions and the other two were fully engulfed before firefighters determined it was safe enough from gas for them to enter the homes, Kenai battalion chief Tony Prior said. He said firefighters focused on keeping the flames from those homes from spreading to nearby houses.

ACROSS THE NATION

Authorities seek 3 inmates—and answers about their escape

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Authorities hunting three dangerous escapees from a maximum-security jail in Southern California called on the public's help to find them Sunday, offering $50,000 in rewards and saying they still don't have all the details of the elaborate escape plan. "We're exhausting every lead that we currently have," Orange County sheriff's Lt. Jeff Hallock said at an afternoon news conference. The three men, including an alleged killer, cut and climbed their way out of the Orange County Men's Central Jail in Santa Ana, about 40 miles southeast of Los Angeles, sometime after the 5 a.m. Friday head count, authorities said. They weren't discovered missing for some 16 hours. The men managed to get hold of some tools and cut through a quarter-inch-thick metal screen in a wall between some bunks in a dormitory they shared with more than 60 men, then used plumbing tunnels, cutting through additional half-inch steel bars, before making it to an unguarded area of the roof of the four-story building, removing some razor wire and rappelling down using ropes braided from linens, authorities said.

Forum over Oregon standoff canceled over safety concerns

BURNS, Ore. (AP)—A judge who planned to host a community meeting Monday over the standoff at an Oregon wildlife refuge has canceled it due to safety concerns. Harney County Judge Steve Grasty said in a news release authorities had become aware of plans to protest the meeting and block the entrance to the county senior center, where it was to be held. Earlier Grasty had said that a no-guns policy would be strictly enforced at the meeting. A spokeswoman for the county said Sunday afternoon she didn't have further information about the safety concerns or specifically who intended to block the senior center entrance. An armed group led by Ammon Bundy has been occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge since Jan. 2 to protest federal land use policies. Oregon lawmakers have been increasing their pressure on federal authorities to step in and end the occupation.

Asia

Large metal chunk investigated after washing onto Thai beach

BANGKOK (AP)—A large chunk of metal that could be from an aircraft washed ashore in southern Thailand, but Malaysian authorities have cautioned against speculation of a link to a Malaysia Airlines flight missing almost two years.

The location on the eastern side of Thailand where the debris was found also means it is highly unlikely that the material is from the missing plane.

Flight MH370 lost communications and made a sharp turn away from its Beijing destination before disappearing in March 2014. It is presumed to have crashed in the Indian Ocean, and only one piece of debris has been identified as coming from the plane, a slab of wing that washed ashore on Reunion Island in the western Indian Ocean last July.

Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said he instructed Malaysian civil aviation officials to contact Thailand about the newly found wreckage, a curved piece of metal measuring about 2 meters by 3 meters (6 ½ feet by 10 feet) with electrical wires hanging from it and numbers stamped on it in several places.

"I urge the media and the public not to speculate because it will give undue pressure to the loved ones of the victims of MH370," he said.

Thailand's Transportation Ministry said four Malaysian officials and two Thai experts will visit the site Monday.

Liow said the search for the missing jet, which carried 239 people, is ongoing in the southern Indian Ocean and that its second phase is expected to be completed by June. Australia has led a multinational search that has so far cost more than $120 million.

Australian Transport Safety Bureau spokesman Dan O'Malley said the agency was awaiting results of an official examination of the debris.

The debris was found on the eastern coast of southern Thailand's Nakkon Si Thammarat province, about 370 miles (600 kilometers) south of Bangkok on the Gulf of Thailand.

While debris can drift thousands of miles (kilometers) on ocean currents, that location would be a surprise based on the data from Flight MH370. The presumed crash site in the Indian Ocean and the fact the wing piece was found on Reunion Island mean it would be highly unlikely any current could have carried a piece of the missing plane to Thailand's eastern coast.

Dozens of deaths blamed on rare cold snap in Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—An unusually cold weather front has been blamed for killing 57 mostly elderly people in Taiwan's greater Taipei area.

The cold wave abruptly pushed temperatures to a 16-year record low of 4 degrees Celsius (39.2 degrees Fahrenheit) in the subtropical capital where most homes lack central heating, causing heart trouble and shortness of breath for many of the victims, a city official said.

"In our experience, it's not the actual temperature but the sudden drop that's too sudden for people's circulatory systems," said a city spokesman who identified himself only by his surname, Chang.

The cold snap was blamed in the deaths of 40 people in the capital, Taipei, while the neighboring New Taipei City attributed an additional 17 deaths to the cold weather. Strokes and hypothermia were among the causes of death in New Taipei City, officials there said.

Temperatures in Taipei average 16 degrees C (60 degrees F) in January, according to Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau. Because of the relatively mild norms, most households in Taiwan lack central heating, another suspected factor in the recent deaths.

New Taipei City said it was providing shelter for 91 homeless people endangered by the cold.

The cold front also left 9 centimeters (3.5 inches) of snow on Taipei's highest peak Saturday and stranded vehicles as people headed into the mountains to see the snow.

The same polar front closed schools Monday in Hong Kong, where 130 people had been trapped at day earlier on a peak in the city that also seldom gets such cold weather. Hong Kong temperatures reached 3.1 degrees Sunday.

Temperatures in Taipei are forecast to reach 17 degrees Tuesday.

Malaysian PM defends strict security laws to fight terrorism

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's leader on Monday defended the country's strict security laws, saying they are needed to fight terrorism as the Islamic State group warned of revenge over a crackdown on its members.

Prime Minister Najib Razak said the terrorism threat is "very real" and that the laws are crucial to ensure Malaysia is not open to infiltration. Opening a two-day international counter-terrorism conference, Najib said he will not apologize for taking steps to preserve national security.

"There are no civil liberties under Daesh and there are no shields against those who are set on committing acts of terrorism. The best way to uphold civil liberties is to ensure the safety of the nation," Najib said.

Daesh is the term used by some to refer to the Islamic State group.

Najib said digital media has emerged as the new frontier in the anti-terror war to counter the "seductive approaches of the militants" and their lies about Islam.

Human rights activists have slammed a law implemented last year that revives detention without trial. Critics also voiced fears that another law approved last month that gives sweeping powers to a council led by the prime minister could be a step toward dictatorship.

Police earlier said the Islamic State group had posted a video that warns of attacks over the arrest of its members.

Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay, who heads the national police counter-terrorism unit, said on the sidelines of the conference that the video carried the Islamic State logo and featured two Malaysians based in Syria. He said there were previous videos with similar warnings before but this was the first video with a logo of the militant group.

"They threaten to carry out attacks in Malaysia" if their members are not released and more are arrested, said Ayob, vowing that police will step up their operations.

On Sunday, police said they had detained seven men suspected of being an Islamic State militant cell that was plotting attacks. The seven Malaysians were detained in several states over three days after the Jan. 15 detention of a man police said was planning a suicide attack in Kuala Lumpur.

World

Despite patrols, sealing Greek sea border is near impossible

CHIOS, Greece (AP)—In the inky nighttime blackness, a small red dot appears on the radar screen, moving fast.

"That's a smuggler," the captain of the coast guard's lifeboat says, swinging the vessel around and opening up the throttle, the boat cutting through the water on a frigid January night.

But the lifeboat, designed for search-and-rescue operations rather than high-speed chases, is no match for the smuggler's speedboat. The smuggler ignores the searchlight, the shouts and the warning shots fired by the Greek coast guard, deftly navigating his small white vessel onto a tiny patch of beach among rocks.

There he disgorges his human cargo—men, women and children risking their lives in a quest for safety and a better future in Europe. They use ropes to scramble up a cliff, heading toward a lighthouse on an island they are soon to discover is deserted save for an army outpost. They will spend a cold, wet, uncomfortable night there until the coast guard can send boats in the morning.

AP

In this photo taken on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2016, a Frontex speedboat with a Dutch crew transfers about 25 refugees and migrants from the deserted Greek island of Pasas to the nearby island of Oinousses, near Chios island.

Burkina Faso detains 5 more soldiers accused in armory raid

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—Burkina Faso's army says it has detained five members of a disbanded unit loyal to the country's former president who are suspected of involvement in a raid on an armory. One member of the unit was killed in an exchange of gunfire near the border with Ghana, an army spokesman said Sunday.

Authorities already had 10 soldiers and one civilian in custody over their suspected roles in Friday's pre-dawn raid on the weapons warehouse outside Ouagadougou, which exacerbated security concerns one week after Islamic extremists killed 30 people when they attacked a cafe and hotel popular with foreigners in the city.

Capt. Aziz Ouedroaogo, an army spokesman, said troops were looking for seven more soldiers in connection with the raid and stopped six of them Sunday evening near the border with Ghana.

Ouedroago said one of them opened fire on troops and was shot and killed by government soldiers.

Officials have not specified how many weapons were seized during the armory raid, though they said some Kalashnikov rifles and anti-tank rocket launchers remain unaccounted for.

The arrested soldiers all come from the former presidential guard, which is loyal to former Blaise Compaore, the longtime president ousted in an October 2014 uprising.

WORLD BRIEFS

US official seeks support for European trade deal in Poland

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman was welcomed Sunday by Polish entrepreneurs as he worked to finalize a free trade pact between the United States and the European Union. Froman said the two sides are trying to conclude the deal, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, this year after nearly three years of negotiations. There is resistance from some Europeans to the planned agreement, which aims to eliminate tariffs and create common regulatory standards between the world's two biggest economies. Opponents fear a lowering in food safety standards and the undermining of local regulations by giving international arbitration panels the power to rule over disputes. In Warsaw, Froman told a group of young Poles with startups, among them software developers, that the deal would be especially helpful to small and medium-sized businesses like theirs. He said they would benefit from a harmonizing of regulatory standards and intellectual property protection. "It's small and medium-sized businesses that are driving the economy. And if we can make life easier for them, it's good for all of our economies," Froman said.

Video shows Paris attackers committing earlier IS atrocities

PARIS (AP)—New video released by the Islamic State group on Sunday shows the extremists who carried out the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris committing atrocities in IS-controlled territory while plotting the slaughter in the French capital that left 130 people dead and hundreds injured. The group also threatened to attack Britain. The 17-minute video shows the extent of the planning that went into the multiple attacks in Paris, which French authorities have said from the beginning were planned in Syria. The video was provided online by the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors jihadi websites. All nine militants seen in the video died in the Paris attacks or their aftermath. Seven of the attackers—four from Belgium and three from France—spoke fluent French. The two others—identified by their noms de guerre as Iraqis—spoke in Arabic. Seven of the militants, including a 20-year-old who was the youngest of the group, were filmed standing behind bound captives, described as "apostates," who were either beheaded or shot. "Soon on the Champs-Elysées," says Samy Amimour, who was raised in a Paris suburb near the French national stadium, as he holds a captive's head aloft.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

2016 Toyota Prius improves on style, handling and fuel economy

By ROBERT DUFFER
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

MCT
The fourth-generation 2016 Toyota Prius gets longer, leaner, more stylish and more efficient.

The Toyota Prius is easy to mock. It's shaped like a clog, has an eye-crossing split window hatch, is as fun to drive as a hot dog cart and it is the vehicle of choice for many cabbies, who are unequivocally the worst drivers on the road.

The main reason the Prius gets mocked, however, is because it is the very best at what it was made to do: get people to their destination using the least amount of gas possible.

The fourth-generation Prius, fully redesigned for 2016, does it even better.

The world's best-selling hybrid gets 54 mpg city, up from 51 mpg in the 2015 model, largely through reducing weight and improving the hybrid motor components.

Improving fuel economy on the most fuel-efficient car without a plug might seem inconsequential with the national average gas price at $2, but Prius owners are more farsighted than other impulse- and emotion-driven car shoppers. A 2015 Consumer Reports reader survey found that of the 10 car models that are safe bets to make it past the 200,000-mile mark, there were "more (Priuses) on the far side of 200K than any other model in our survey."

Toyota is giving them even more reason to hold onto the 2016 Prius, which looks more like a Corolla hatch than an egg-shaped icon, and has a bit more spunk behind the wheel.

The outgoing model had a high, round roofline that tapered into a chunky rear hatch. The nose has been lowered on the new model, the belt line rises a bit higher and the arc of the roofline flattens out toward the back, so it looks more like a sneaker than a clog. It's also two inches longer. The triangular bi-LED headlights resemble a hawk squinting into a nosedive, and the shape of the split grille with the protruding bottom lip makes it appear as if its mouth is opened for prey. The grille houses active shutters, which help control airflow, reduce aerodynamic drag and increase efficiency. The taillights bend into the belt line instead of rising vertically, giving the whole body a leaner, longer profile.

The most notable design change of the 2016 Prius is the cockpit. With its vehicle information display in the center of the dash above the center stack, instead of directly in front of the steering wheel as it is in nearly every other car, the Prius has always been oddball or distinctive, depending on how you feel about the driver being more removed from the gauges.

The 2016 display is clearer, wider and more recessed in the dash, nearer the windshield than the center stack. It's split into two 4.2-inch displays, with the speedometer and energy use info on the right side, and customizable features such as radio stations, trip meters and other info on the left. Like the outside, the dash looks sleeker, less boxy and more stretched out. The glove box is lower, the center stack is less cluttered and the gear stick gets its own panel.

The 6.1-inch touch screen is on the smaller side, but it is flanked with source buttons and strong voice command recognition to limit how much you have to touch it.

Our tester had a charcoal-on-white interior, with chrome trim. Rear seats still get a 60/40 split, and Toyota says the more compact battery unit fits beneath the rear seat instead of the cargo floor, increasing cargo room by three cubic feet, to 24.6, and enabling the Prius to haul more bikes, dogs and backpacks.

Overall the wide plain of the dashboard and the neat composition of the controls felt more relaxed than the old Prius, whose more in-your-face layout seemed to insist you pay attention to fuel consumption. The 2016 Prius doesn't have to prove its fuel efficiency prowess as much.

Toyota set out to prove the famed fuel sipper could have some driving dynamics, too, by utilizing its new global architecture for a stiffer chassis, and a double wishbone rear suspension. The Prius won't be mistaken for fast even in power mode but there's a little more feedback dipping in and out of corners. The car stays a little lower to the ground so that for a moment, until you hit the gas pedal, it handles better than previous iterations.

Most Prius owners won't care, but there are practical people who still appreciate having a car that can match their moods. The new Prius scratches the smallest of itches.

Unfortunately, that split window is still there, and every time I glanced in the rearview mirror I had to do a double take, not at what was behind us but at what was riding in back with us.

There were a few problems with our prototype that were either anomalies, or that we hope will be corrected. When in reverse, the insistent beeping is louder and more obnoxious than an unfastened seat belt beep. Midway down our midlength driveway, we put it neutral to shut it up. There was no owner's manual to figure out how to change it in vehicle settings, but there must be a way.

We also experienced damage to the undershield on the driver's side wheel well that had to have been a result of our driving or ice blocks more than anything faulty with the design.

But once again, the Prius excels at what it was meant to do — stretch a gallon of gas over as many miles as possible.

NUTS & BOLTS

2016 Toyota Prius Two at a glance

- Vehicle type: Hybrid compact
- Base price: $24,200 As tested: $24,200 (excluding $835 delivery)
- MPG: 54 city, 50 highway
- Engine: 1.8-liter 4-cylinder with nickel-metal hydride battery-powered motor (lithium-ion is available)
- Transmission: 2-speed CVT
- Parting shot: The fuel economy champ gets a bit more style and flash for 2016.

MOTORING Q&A

Mazda remote causing all sorts of problems

By PAUL BRAND
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Q: Please help! Neither my local Mazda dealer nor independents can come up with a solution to the problem with my 2006 Mazda Tribute. Not always, but every so often, the remote will not lock the doors, will not unlock the doors, and then I cannot start the car. After much manipulation of the remote, open and closing doors, etc., it finally works. I have purchased new remotes, changed batteries in remotes, but nothing helps. Sure hope you can help; it is mighty frustrating.

A: Did either service agency plug in a scan tool to check for fault codes? If not, this is the first step. A search of my automotive database found that if codes B1300 or B2111 are stored in memory the problem is with the power door lock circuits, possibly a short to ground. B2425 would indicate that the remote keyless entry, or RKE, transmitter is out of sync with the smart junction box, or SJB. This can occur if the RKE button is pushed a number of times when outside the range of the transmitter. To resynchronize the rolling code system, with the key off press any button on the RKE four times within 30 seconds. The SJB or its connections might be at fault.

When the vehicle will not start, do you notice the security warning light on the dash? The passive anti-theft system, or PATS, on this vehicle has an anti-scan feature that prevents attempts to enter or start the vehicle with some type of rolling code generator. If a damaged, uncoded or incorrect key is used to switch the ignition on, the PATS system will prevent the vehicle from starting and flash the security light rapidly for 60 seconds, then flash a fault code. If you have two keys, switch the ignition off after the security light has flashed rapidly for 20 seconds, remove the key and insert the other key. Turn the ignition on, then off, then try to start the car. If it starts, the first key was not programmed properly.

Q: I read your comment that you change oil more frequently than recommended by the manufacturer. Why? Isn't it wasteful to change oil more often, wasting both money and oil? On what do you base your recommendation?

A: Simple answer: it's MY vehicle, not the manufacturer's. The cost of this "extra" maintenance is far, far less than the cost of premature engine problems due to sludge from lubricant oxidation, contamination, fuel dilution or additive depletion. Are any of these likely to happen? No. Do they happen? Yes. Who pays for repairs, lost value, etc.? Carmakers? No. Me? Yes.

And the "prematurely" changed oil is not wasted, it is recycled. In fact, I often re-use it in my small-engine equipment.

Paul Brand, author of How to Repair Your Car, *is an automotive troubleshooter, driving instructor and former race-car driver. Readers may write to him at: Star Tribune, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn., 55488 or via email at paulbrand@startribune.com. Please explain the problem in detail and include a daytime phone number. Because of the volume of mail, we cannot provide personal replies.*

Life & Style

Miss Universe winner says next dream is to be a Bond girl

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The reigning Miss Universe has her eyes set on her next big dream: being a Bond girl.

Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach returned home to the Philippines for the first time since her crowning—and that awkward moment when host Steve Harvey mistakenly announced Miss Colombia as the winner instead of her. She said Sunday she's using the intense attention she got after that controversy to focus on her causes like fighting HIV and AIDS.

"I'm using the attention to talk about my causes. Now, I have everybody's attention," she said.

She told a news conference that she plans to be tested for HIV publicly in New York to encourage other people to be tested, including in the Philippines, where HIV cases have risen alarmingly in recent years.

Miss Colombia Ariadna Gutierrez Arevalo was briefly crowned Miss Universe at the pageant in Las Vegas last month before Harvey returned to center stage to apologize and announced he misread the card, which had Miss Philippines as the winner and Colombia as the first runner-up.

Asked about her plans after her reign, Wurtzbach said she would consider possible job offers in the United States, adding: "I might be the next Bond girl, who knows? So, we'll see, that's the next dream."

Many international actresses have been cast alongside actors playing British agent James Bond and are popularly known as "Bond girls."

Wurtzbach, 26, has worked as an actress and model in the Philippines before winning the crown. The Miss Universe pageant is a big deal in the Philippines, where two other women have brought home the crown before her, with the last one winning in 1973.

On Monday, Wurtzbach will meet President Benigno Aquino III, a bachelor who is rumored to have gone on a date with her before. She'll receive a citation from the Senate for her victory then join a motorcade around Manila that will end with a fireworks show.

Wurtzbach told reporters she was so overwhelmed with her triumph that she constantly checked on her crown in the initial days and even took a nap beside it but decided not to do that again because she might break it.

"God forbid that would happen, the Filipinos are gonna kill me. I haven't even done my homecoming yet," she said, repeatedly touching the diamond-studded crown.

AP

Newly crowned Miss Universe Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach shows her crown during a news conference Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016 in suburban Quezon City, northeast of Manila, Philippines.

AP

This image provided by the Sundance Institute shows people praying at a church in a scene from the documentary film, "Newton," directed by Kim. A. Snyder.

'Newtown' explores the aftermath of tragedy in a community

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—In approaching a subject as sensitive as the Newtown, Connecticut shootings of December 14, 2012, in which 20 children and 6 educators were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School, director Kim Snyder knew first what she didn't want to do. She didn't want to make it a portrait of a murderer. She didn't want to name Adam Lanza. She didn't want to show the surviving children. And she didn't want to "cast" the families she would ultimately use to tell the story.

Instead, Snyder let the story come to her organically over a long period of time through the interfaith community in the town. In her powerful and illuminating film, "Newtown," which premiered Sunday at the Sundance Film Festival, Snyder explores the effects of the events of that day on a community—through families, teachers, religious leaders, a volunteer EMT, a neighbor, and a sheriff, among others.

"I don't really have an agenda here other than to render some truthful trajectory of what aftermath looks like as a town," Snyder told The Associated Press before the Festival. "That whole first 7 or 8 months, I didn't feel any compulsion to try to get in touch with the families, and then over time I started to learn more holistically about the community and I started a process of trust building."

Snyder had just gotten back from Newtown, where she screened the film for 20 participants for the first time. Some of her subjects accompanied her and the film to the Festival.

"I'm a little wrecked. It was intense," she said.

In addition to developing authentic relationships with many of the townspeople, Snyder also was able to get accounts from those who wanted to talk by setting up a camera in the basement of a church at the service of the one year anniversary of the event.

"In those beginning ones, I would leave the room," Snyder said. "I just said if there's something you feel like saying, please say it."

While "Newtown" isn't explicitly political, it does have an undeniable point of view as you listen to the heartbreaking testimonials, see the lingering effects of the horrors have had on so many people, and watch the families become accidental public advocates.

Message of Appreciation

Words cannot adequately express the profound appreciation that all of us have to each and every one of you who comforted us in our time of need after the passing of our beloved †Emilita. We thank you in sharing in our grief, as well as joining us in celebrating that soul of a woman who truly was like no other.

Though she has gone home, we can take solace in the memories we shared with her, and through the kind words and gestures you have graciously given to us during these last few days. For that, all of you will always be remembered in our prayers and our thoughts.

From the bottom of our hearts, we humbly say:

Thank you. Maraming Salamat Po! Un Dangkulo' na Si Yu'os Ma'ase yan Si Yu'os infanbinendise!

Dolly and Nick Muna, Flor and Jeffrey Bacani, Elaine Cabrera and Family

Spike Lee's Michael Jackson doc a tribute to his music

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—As a young artist, Michael Jackson knew he wanted to be legendary.

"I will be magic," he wrote as a teenager, outlining his plans for his career. "I will be better than every great actor roped in one."

Jackson's drive to succeed and his striking talent as a singer, dancer and songwriter are the focus of Spike Lee's new documentary, "Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to 'Off the Wall,'" which made its world premiere Sunday at the Sundance Film Festival.

"This film is all about love toward Michael Joseph Jackson," Lee said as he introduced the film, which is dedicated to Jackson's children Prince, Paris and "Biji" (formerly Blanket), along with family matriarch Katherine Jackson.

Beginning with the Jackson 5's earliest songs with Motown Records—featuring a charismatic 9-year-old Michael on lead vocals—the film explores Jackson's growth as an artist and the perfectionist nature that fueled his work ethic.

Archival footage of the Jacksons' performances on "The Ed Sullivan Show," ''American Bandstand" and their "Destiny" tour is interspersed with interviews with music industry talents from then and now. Sammy Davis Jr., Gene Kelly, Berry Gordy, Quincy Jones and Questlove, along with contemporary music producers Mark Ronson and Rodney Jerkins, are among dozens of voices in the film. Jackson's brothers Marlon and Jackie also appear on screen, but sisters Janet and LaToya do not.

AP

This image provided by courtesy of the Sundance Institute and Optimum Productions shows director Spike Lee whose documentary film, "Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to Off the Wall," is included among the documentaries premiering at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

"Everyone was invited to participate, but we used those who wanted to participate," said Jackson's longtime attorney John Branca, now executor of Jackson's estate and a producer of the film. "Certain (members) of the Jackson family are not quite big fans of (fellow attorney) John and I, but that's fine. We're trying to do right by Michael."

This film makes viewers miss Jackson's dynamic dancing and mellifluous voice while deepening their appreciation of his talents and endless efforts to hone them.

"I do believe deeply in perfection," Jackson says in a 1976 interview.

It captures Jackson's evolution from a breakout child star to a multifaceted adult entertainer determined to transcend barriers of race and genre. Even as a teenager, he dreamed of being able to "translate my music to different countries: Japan, Sweden... even Australia."

"He took black music to a place where it became human music," Pharrell Williams says in the film. "My music would not be here if it wasn't for his music."

Lee goes beyond music, however: Ballerina Misty Copeland credits Jackson for inspiring her love of dance. L.A. Laker Kobe Bryant says Jackson's approach to his art "impacted everything for me."

The late Sidney Lumet, who directed Jackson in the 1978 film "The Wiz," said: "Michael may be the purest talent I've ever seen."

Stillman tries Jane Austen in charming 'Love & Friendship'

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—Whit Stillman, one of our best chroniclers of the modern leisure class, has gone back to the 18th century in "Love & Friendship," an effervescent comedy about a deviously ambitious social climber.

The film premiered Saturday night at the Sundance Film Festival.

In the film, Stillman's "Last Days of Disco" stars Kate Beckinsale and Chloë Sevigny have traded their early '80s sequins and Lacoste for bustles and petticoats. Beckinsale is Lady Susan Vernon, recently widowed and on the prowl for status, money and comforts, while Sevigny plays a married American all too willing to associate with the notorious Lady Susan.

We enter the story when Lady Susan takes up an extended visit at the estate of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Catherine Vernon (Emma Greenwall). There she begins a flirtation with Catherine's younger brother, Reginald De Courcy (Xavier Samuel). No one is particularly keen on the developing relationship between Lady Susan and the young Reginald De Courcy, and that sentiment is especially exaggerated when her neglected and marriage-aged daughter, Frederica (Morfydd Clark), shows up too.

These are only half the players in the game, and it's fun to watch them scheme and spread rumors and make deliciously biting remarks about their supposed friends and family for a brisk 92 minutes.

Overall, the film is a charming lark, and a definite departure for Stillman as he evolves here beyond his famously precise, formal language which is usually applied to a more modern setting, whether it be early '80s discos or present day dorm rooms ("Damsels in Distress"). Stillman seems a perfect fit for Victorian comedy and the language and customs of Austen, and it works well, although it does have the effect of burying some of Stillman's distinctiveness.

"It's very early Jane Austen. She was in a very funny mode when she wrote this," Stillman said before the Festival. "It's not very sentimental."

Unlike many Sundance features, "Love & Friendship" had a deal in place with Amazon prior to its premiere - it'll also get a theatrical run from Roadside Attractions. And it's worth checking out whether you're an Austen devotee, or just a fan of crackling dialogue and diabolical social situations.

Obamas' love blooms in 'Southside With You'

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—It's the sweet, romantic story of a first date—albeit the fictionalized first date of the couple who currently occupy the White House.

"Southside With You," the feature film based on Barack Obama and Michelle Robinson's first date, debuted Sunday to a packed house at the Sundance Film Festival.

The movie tells the story of a single day in 1989—the first day that summer associate, Harvard student Barack Obama (Parker Sawyers), spent with his adviser, Michelle Robinson (Tika Sumpter), a second-year associate with a Chicago corporate law firm. He believes he's on a date. She believes she's spending the day with a professional colleague. By the end of a day that moves from The Art Institute of Chicago to a picnic lunch to a community organizing meeting, sharing beers and the then-newly released Spike Lee film "Do the Right Thing," they're both on the same page.

AP

Richard Tanne, second from left, writer/director of "Southside With You," poses with cast members Parker Sawyers, far left, and Tika Sumpter, third from left, and executive producer John Legend at the premiere of the film at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival on Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016, in Park City, Utah.

Sawyer's portrayal of Obama brings to the screen the unmistakable cadence and quick smile of the man who would become president. Sumpter shows a young Michelle as confident and determined, caring and kind.

Director and screenwriter Richard Tanne says though the movie is fictionalized, he researched what actually happened on the date from news articles and books. He filled in the conversation—"there wasn't a note-taker on the date."

Sumpter, who also co-produced the film, said her aim was simple: "Ultimately, I wanted to see someone who looked like me falling in love up there and I think everybody can relate to that. ... It's not Republican, Democrat or anything else. It's just a love story."

Sumpter said she was intrigued by the concept of the film when she saw the synopsis.

"Just the perspective—not seeing these two as we see them now, but from before. ... It started because I was just inspired by the love story ... and I wanted to see that kind of love up there. It's not the normal rom-com. It's real conversations of what might have been said," she said.

All Broadway shows on Saturday shutter as snow builds

NEW YORK (AP)—All Broadway shows—both matinees and evening performances—were canceled Saturday after New York state officials declared a weather emergency.

A ban on travel in New York and the suspension of public transportation forced Broadway producers and theater owners to pull the plug only about an hour before 2 p.m. matinees were due to start.

Disney Theatrical Productions was the first to cancel, announcing that their "Aladdin" and "The Lion King" would be closed as snow and wind smashed through Times Square.

"We expect normal operations to resume for tomorrow's Sunday matinees," said Charlotte St. Martin, president of The Broadway League, which represents producers.

The storm didn't stop the inaugural three-day BroadwayCon—sort of like a ComicCon for thespians—at a midtown hotel. Some 5,000 theater fans were geeking out on shows and celebrities.

Further north, a Rita Moreno concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center was canceled, as were performances at the New York Philharmonic, New York City Ballet, The Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Theater. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was closed, as was The Museum of Modern Art. The off-Broadway show "Fuerza Bruta" was also no match for the storm.

The last time Broadway took a big weather hit was Superstorm Sandy in 2012. It darkened Broadway for four days and cost more than $8.5 million in lost revenue.

‘The Revenant’ braves the blizzard with $16M at box office

NEW YORK (AP)—The snowy frontier saga “The Revenant” weathered a blizzard-ravaged box office.

Weekend movie-going was affected up and down the East Coast by Winter Storm Jonas, which forced theater closures in Washington D.C. and New York, and caused hundreds of theaters to suspend showings. Studio executives said the storm had a major effect on business.

“It had a huge effect on the entire marketplace,” said Kevin Grayson, head of domestic distribution for STX Entertainment, which debuted the horror thriller “The Boy.” ‘’Anywhere from 300 to 400 theaters were affected.”

Fittingly, the film that most flourished in the frigid winter weather was 20th Century Fox’s Oscar-nominated “Revenant,” which took in an estimated $16 million in its third week of wide release. The Alejandro Inarritu-directed thriller, set in the 1820s, is proving to be one of Leonardo DiCaprio’s biggest hits with $119.2 million in North America thus far. It was also the top film internationally over the weekend with $33.8 million.

Disney’s “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” came in second with $14.3 million in its sixth week of release. “The Force Awakens,” with $1.94 billion globally to date, will likely cross $2 billion in the next week.

Last week’s No. 1 movie, the Kevin Hart-Ice Cube comedy “Ride Along 2,” dropped steeply in its second week, sliding to third with $13 million for Universal.

Those holdovers were trailed by a trio of new releases: “Dirty Grandpa,” ‘’The Boy” and “The 5th Wave,” which all earned $10 million to $12 million over the weekend.

Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office firm Rentrak, said the storm had an effect, but cautioned against overestimating its impact.

“It probably altered the box office 10 or 12 percent overall,” Dergarabedian said. “This was never predestined to be an earth-shattering box office weekend, anyway.”

Lionsgate’s “Dirty Grandpa,” starring Robert De Niro and Zac Efron, received some of the harshest reviews of the year. It narrowly edged out the other newcomers with an estimated $11.5 million.

“The Boy,” a PG-13 rated supernatural tale that cost only about $10 million to make, earned an estimated $11.3 million. It appealed strongly to Latino moviegoers, which made up 41 percent of the audience, according to STX.

Sony’s “The 5th Wave,” which cost about $38 million to make, is a young-adult adaption from the first of Rick Yancey’s trilogy of science-fiction books about alien invasion. Starring Chloe Grace Moretz, “The 5th Wave” $10.7 million debut didn’t suggest a budding YA franchise. But Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony, was upbeat about the result and said it came in “ahead of our expectations with the storm.”

“Jonas was certainly no friend to the movie industry,” Bruer said.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

AP

This photo provided by Twentieth Century Fox shows Tom Hardy in a scene from the film, “The Revenant.”

1. **“The Revenant,”** $16 million ($33.8 million international).
3. **“Star Wars: The Force Awakens,”** $14.3 million ($23.3 million international).
3. **“Ride Along 2,”** $13 million ($6.5 million international).
4. **“Dirty Grandpa,”** $11.5 million ($2 million international).
5. **“The Boy,”** $11.3 million ($750,000 international).
6. **“The 5th Wave,”** $10.7 million ($15.9 million international).
7. **“13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi,”** $9.8 million.
8. **“Daddy’s Home,”** $5.3 million ($5.9 million international).
9. **“Norm of the North,”** $4.1 million.
10. **“The Big Short,”** $3.5 million ($10.1 million international).

■■■

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to Rentrak:

1. **“The Revenant,”** $33.8 million.
2. **“Star Wars: The Force Awakens,”** $23.3 million.
3. **“The 5th Wave,”** $15.9 million.
4. **“The Big Short,”** $10.1 million.
5. **“Creed,”** $9.1 million.
6. **“The Hateful Eight,”** $7.5 million.
7. **“The Walk,”** $6.7 million.
8. **“Ride Along 2,”** $6.5 million.
9. **“Boonie Bears III,”** $6 million.
10. **“Daddy’s Home,”** $5.9 million.

Tina Fey returns as Sarah Palin on ‘SNL,’ Oscars parodied

AP

This Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016 image provided by NBC shows Tina Fey, left, as Sarah Palin and Darrell Hammond as Donald Trump during the “Palin Endorsement Cold Open” sketch on “Saturday Night Live.”

NEW YORK (AP)—Tina Fey returned to “Saturday Night Live” to reprise her impression of Sarah Palin and give a rambling, sometimes-rhyming endorsement to Donald Trump.

The sketch kicked off the cold open to “SNL” on Saturday, with Fey and Darrell Hammond skewering the former Alaska governor’s endorsement speech in Iowa on Tuesday. As Palin, Fey said she had come to Iowa to break from “my full-time career of writing things on Facebook.”

“SNL” also parodied this year’s all-white Oscar nominees in a mock award show that nominated white actors playing bit roles in African-American dramas. Last week, the only Oscar nominations that the “Rocky” sequel “Creed” and the N.W.A biopic “Straight Outta Compton” received were for white people: Sylvester Stallone for “Creed,” and “Compton” writers Jonathan Herman and Andrea Berloff.

In the sketch, an award was given to “all the white guys” in predominantly black films modeled after “Creed,” ‘’Compton” and “Beasts of No Nation.” The roles were barely cameos, like: “White Man With Camera” and “Unseen Voice On Phone.”

“Saturday Night Live,” however, has also been much-criticized in the past about its own diversity. Following an uproar in 2013, it added Sasheer Zamata, Leslie Jones and writer LaKendra Tookes.

Unplanned pregnancy can become welcome surprise

DEAR ABBY: I just read the letter from "Expecting in Canada" (Sept. 8) and am disappointed in her daughters' reaction to her pregnancy, as were you.

My own mother announced she was pregnant with my baby brother when she was 42 and my sister and I were in college. Now, 46 years later, I can say he is one of the best things that ever happened to our family. He took great care of both my parents as they grew older and was with them when each passed away. My sister and I are very close to him, even though we nicknamed him "the crown prince" and teased him because that's how my parents treated him.

I hope "Expecting's" daughters will eventually embrace this great gift. If they don't, they may miss out on a wonderful experience and a lot of love.

ELDER SISTER OF THE CROWN PRINCE

DEAR ELDER SISTER: Thank you for your letter. Readers wrote to share their personal experiences as you did. Most agreed that having a child with older parents and siblings can be a life-changing event. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I was a surprise baby. My birth mother was 40 and my birth father was 67. My sisters were 15 and 16. The older one was not happy; the younger one loved having a baby sister.

As fate would have it, my mother died when I was 7 years old. My father was too old to care for a child, so my older sister, the one who hadn't been thrilled with my arrival, and her husband became my "parents." Not every day was perfect, but my life was very blessed.

My sister, whom I called Momma, became ill in her 60s, and my brother-in-law, whom I called Daddy for the rest of his life, also had health problems. I became their "legs" for many errands. When Daddy died I became Momma's primary caregiver.

I would like those two girls to know that the little "intruder" may just be the one who takes care of them someday. I'm shocked that the parents would even entertain the idea of giving the baby away.

JUDY IN LOUISIANA

DEAR ABBY: When I was a junior in high school, my mother told me she was pregnant. I was disgusted and angry, and I told her so. As I reflect back on it, I'm mortified that I could be so cruel. After giving it more thought, I realized I was annoyed to think my parents were sexual beings.

Teenagers that age are just coming to terms with their own sexuality. They can also be somewhat selfish and self-absorbed. While it may be a family matter to some extent, it really is between the mother and father.

My little brother is very close to me now and, more important, close to my children, who are nearer in age to him. I hope that mother won't let the temporary opinion of the daughters ruin a beautiful experience of a shared love.

CHERYL IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ABBY: "Expecting" should ask her daughters to be a part of the baby's life, such as going to doctor's appointments, picking out clothes, decorating the room, giving name suggestions and having them participate in a baby shower.

STEPHANIE IN ILLINOIS

DEAR ABBY: When my mother was 42, my baby brother was born. I was 17 when I became his nanny and learned how to take care of a baby. It was an experience that made me more mature. After I married, I was never able to have my own children.

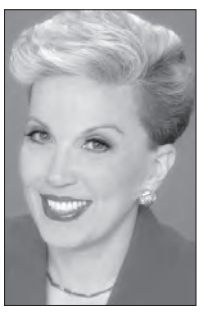
Please don't listen to your daughters. I know what it's like. Perhaps they are jealous that they have to share their parents. My mom and dad were the oldest parents at PTA meetings, graduations, etc., but they were proud of my younger brother. Many times people thought they were the grandparents. We shared many laughs during those years.

EILEEN IN WEST VIRGINIA

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

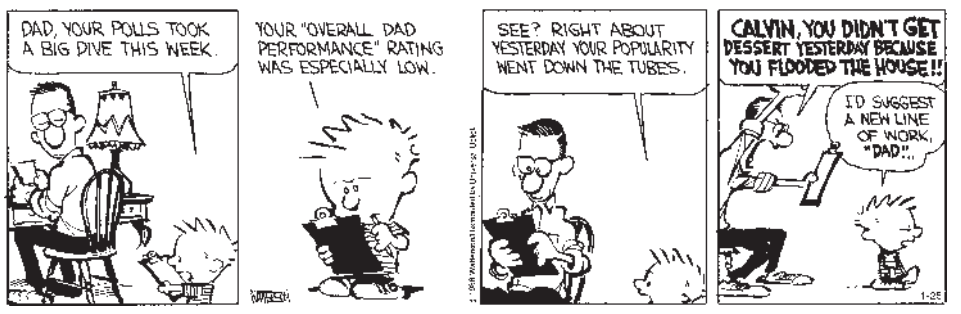


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

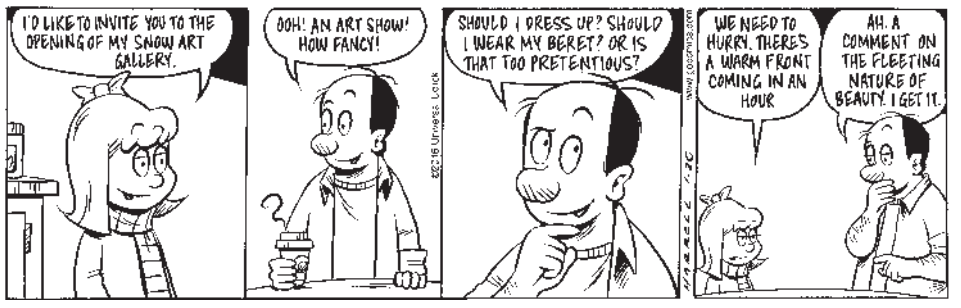

DAD, YOUR POLLS TOOK A BIG DIVE THIS WEEK.
YOUR "OVERALL DAD PERFORMANCE" RATING WAS ESPECIALLY LOW.
SEE? RIGHT ABOUT YESTERDAY YOUR POPULARITY WENT DOWN THE TUBES.
CALVIN, YOU DIDN'T GET DESSERT YESTERDAY BECAUSE YOU FLOODED THE HOUSE!!
I'D SUGGEST A NEW LINE OF WORK, "DAD"!!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

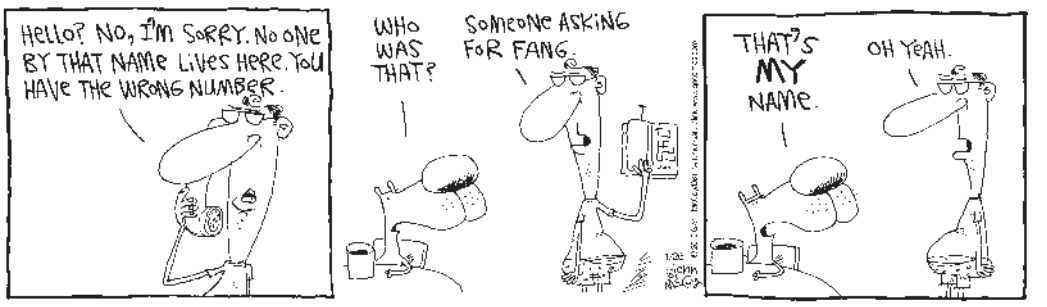
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO THE OPENING OF MY SNOW ART GALLERY.
OOH! AN ART SHOW! HOW FANCY!
SHOULD I DRESS UP? SHOULD I WEAR MY BERET? OR IS THAT TOO PRETENTIOUS?
WE NEED TO HURRY. THERE'S A WARM FRONT COMING IN AN HOUR
AH. A COMMENT ON THE FLEETING NATURE OF BEAUTY. I GET IT.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


Hello? No, I'm sorry. No one by that name lives here. You have the wrong number.
WHO WAS THAT?
SOMEONE ASKING FOR FANG.
THAT'S MY NAME.
OH YEAH.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Convent dwellers
5 Nest egg acronym
8 JFK postings
12 Rat- —
13 Chaney of horror films
14 Loyal
15 Liveliness
17 Roll call answer
18 Tarzan player
19 Fan's cry
20 Massage dough
21 Cushion
22 Luau keepsake
23 Boring
26 Colorful NBC symbol
30 Prized steed
31 Russian jet
32 Memo start
33 Showy flowers
35 Beer mug
36 Apr. addressee
37 Sauté
38 Rolls- — (luxury car)
41 Hanoi holiday
42 Back muscle, for short
45 Jai —
46 Unmitigated gall
48 Mr. Gingrich
49 — Dhabi
50 Estate beneficiary
51 Crooner Bennett
52 Tree juice
53 Car

DOWN

1 Church area
2 Power co.
3 Dark blue
4 RR depot
5 Troy story
6 Type of 5-Across
7 Whatever
8 Census data
9 Elm or oak
10 Glow
11 Plant starter
16 Jam-packed
20 Mauna —
21 Media "ink"
22 Triathlon part
23 Owned
24 Mouths (Lat.)
25 "So there!"
26 Magnum, et. al.
27 Lunch hour
28 Dernier —
29 Barbie's friend
31 Bell and Barker
34 Intense anger
35 Madrid miss (Abbr.)
37 Disgusted
38 Go ballistic
39 Butter sub
40 Sign of fatigue
41 Sousaphone, e.g.
42 Stead
43 Bickering
44 Beginner
46 Small batteries
47 Dance start

Solution time: 22 mins.

B	A	T			A	R	C		M	A	A	M
E	R	O	S		B	E	L		A	I	D	A
A	T	O	M		S	E	A		X	R	A	Y
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			R	I	M		O	C	E	L	O	T
V	E	R	T	I	G	O		S	L	O	S	H
A	L	E	C		M	R	S		L	O	L	A
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F	U	J	I		N	O	G		R	O	U	T
E	R	I	E		A	N	Y		I	O	R	Y
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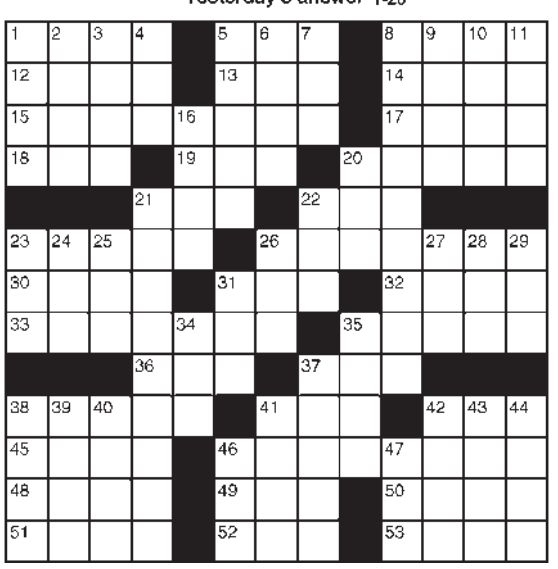
Yesterday's answer 1-25



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CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Sara Rue, 37; Ellen DeGeneres, 58; Eddie Van Halen, 61; Lucinda Williams, 63.

Happy Birthday: Try to move forward without sharing too much information with others. Your challenge will be to accomplish things without interference. Hone your skills and make your presentation flawless before you share. Confidence will be the key to persuading others to support your efforts. Invest in yourself and you will not be disappointed. Your numbers are 5, 9, 17, 20, 29, 32, 41.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You will need to give more than your normal effort. Don't assume that those you encounter know what you are capable of doing. Money can be made and a good position obtained by presenting your skills with confidence. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Just showing up and doing your thing can work wonders for you as long as you don't let jealousy interfere. Expect to face competition and prepare to learn through observation. A humble approach is your ticket to victory. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Step back and witness what's going on around you. Emotional matters will escalate, and just when you think you have something to celebrate, you'll come up against a snag that requires additional work on your part. Pay attention to detail. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Your outlook and attitude will be unique. Partnerships will take a favorable turn, allowing you to resolve any issue that has been a concern in the past. Romance will bring you closer to the one you love. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't fret over life's little frustrations. Embark on a new adventure that promises to help you use your talents to get ahead. Discipline will result in victory, and dedication will help you maintain what you have been able to capture. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You can have it all if you are precise, resourceful and take matters into your own hands. Opportunity is knocking, and a gesture on your part will seal the deal. Love, money and happiness will be the result of doing things your way. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Problems with health, friendships and domestic situations are better not discussed. You'll have better luck researching and putting together a plan that will help you bring about positive lifestyle changes. Get your personal papers in order. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Form alliances with people who can contribute something unique to a project you want to pursue. Your ability to get things done and to capture the attention of individuals with clout will lead to an interesting opportunity and future success. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't limit what you can accomplish by being indecisive or lazy. The more time spent improving your current living situation, the easier it will be for you to avoid anyone who is trying to meddle in your affairs. Protect your assets. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You can make a difference if you make a move. Sign contracts and negotiate until you get what you want. You have plenty to gain if you take control of matters and refuse to let anyone interfere with your decision. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Take note of what is working for you and what isn't. Do whatever it takes to weed out any trouble spots in your life so that you can move forward without baggage. Make choices that will allow you to live life your way. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Set your sights on what you want and go after your goals wholeheartedly. The effort you put in will pay off emotionally, financially and physically. You have plenty to look forward to if you follow your heart. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are persistent and engaging. You are smart and comprehensive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		3		2	9		7	
6								
			6					5
8			5		6	9		
3			2	9	4			6
		4	3		1			7
5					7			
								9
	2		1	3		5		

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

9	6	2	5	8	1	4	3	7
7	5	4	9	6	3	2	8	1
3	8	1	4	7	2	6	5	9
4	7	8	3	1	5	9	2	6
1	2	5	8	9	6	3	7	4
6	9	3	2	4	7	8	1	5
2	3	6	1	5	9	7	4	8
5	4	9	7	3	8	1	6	2
8	1	7	6	2	4	5	9	3

Difficulty Level ★ 1/25

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

PULMONARY VEINS AND ARTERIES Solution: 11 letters

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E	E	R	I	U	S	U	C	N	U	R	T	C	S	I
S	M	T	O	R	N	U	A	T	R	I	U	M	L	M
C	I	E	A	I	S	G	B	L	O	O	D	A	E	E
E	L	R	P	N	R	A	S	C	L	A	I	D	S	T
N	U	I	H	O	E	E	C	E	L	H	I	D	S	S
D	N	O	A	T	P	G	F	S	C	A	I	R	E	Y
I	A	S	R	R	S	T	Y	N	L	L	V	A	V	S
N	R	U	Y	A	R	T	O	X	I	W	L	I	L	V
G	N	S	N	C	E	R	P	R	O	V	E	N	A	E
K	N	A	G	H	B	A	B	L	E	E	D	G	R	N
T	R	I	E	E	I	E	F	O	R	M	D	R	T	U
H	C	R	A	A	F	H	L	L	A	W	I	O	I	L
I	E	S	L	M	C	I	T	S	A	L	E	U	M	E
N	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	O	I	R	E	P	U	S

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Air Sacs, Alveoli, Arch, Arteriosus, Atrium, Bleed, Blood, Bronchial, Deliver, Deoxygenated, Descending, Drain, Elastic, Fibers, Flow, Form, Group, Heart, Inferior, Left, Lungs, Main, Media, Mitral, Organs, Pharyngeal, Prove, Semilunar, Septum, Subclavian, Superior, Systemic, Thin, Trachea, Truncus, Trunk, Veins, Venules, Vessels, Wall

Yesterday's Answer: Worldwide

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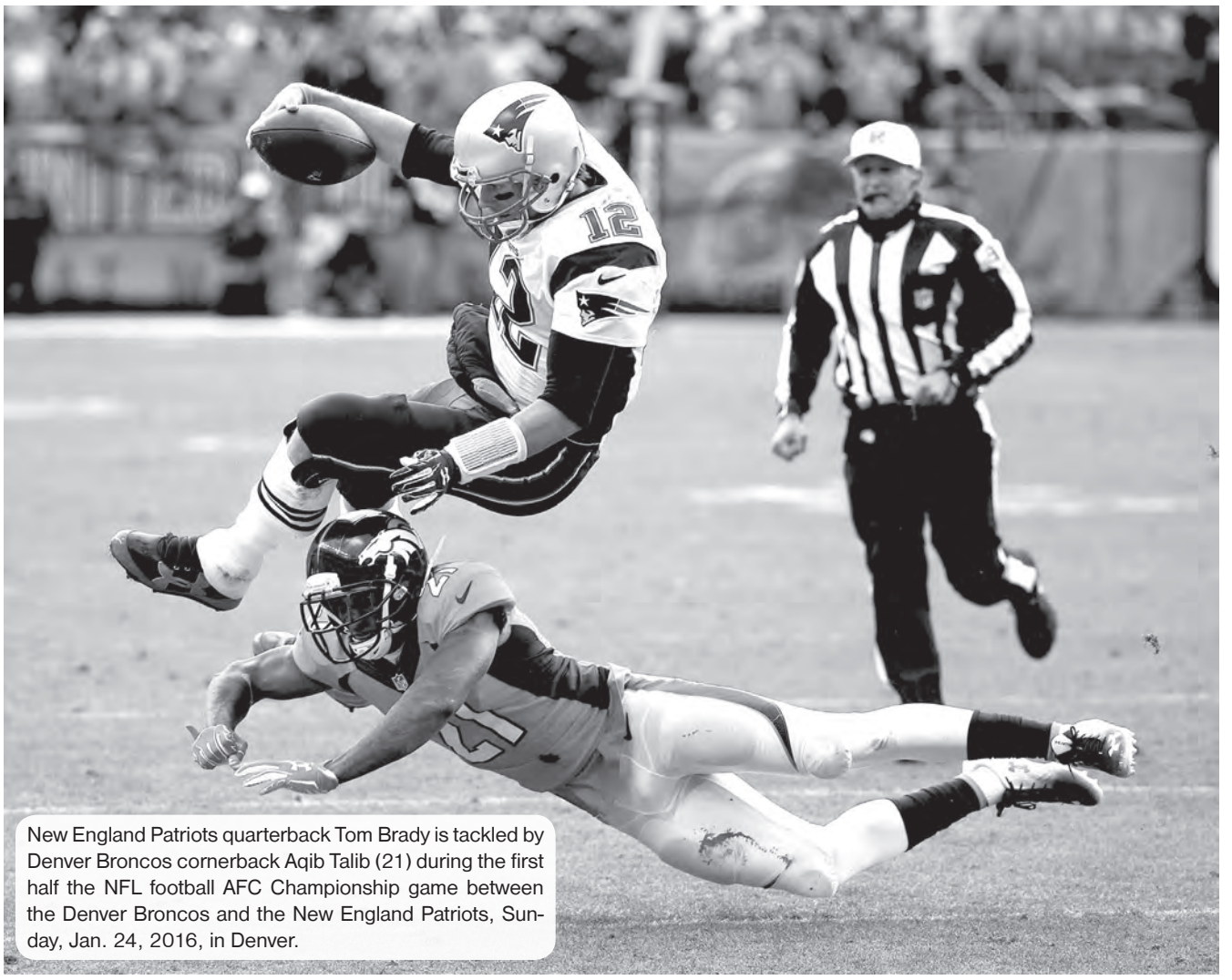

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is tackled by Denver Broncos cornerback Aqib Talib (21) during the first half the NFL football AFC Championship game between the Denver Broncos and the New England Patriots, Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016, in Denver.

DENVER (AP)—If this 17th matchup with Tom Brady was indeed the final one, Peyton Manning got the last laugh—thanks to Von Miller.

The star of Denver's dizzying defense had 2½ sacks, an interception that set up a touchdown and a pass breakup in the Broncos' 20-18 win over the New England Patriots in the AFC championship game Sunday.

"Hey, I tell you. I can do it all, baby," Miller cracked.

No joke.

The Broncos (14-4) beat the Patriots (13-5) for the second time this season, and they dethroned the defending champs by hitting Brady an incredible 23 times.

"He was rattled," Aqib Talib said. "I don't think I've ever seen anybody put that much pressure on Tom - ever. So, I think we did a hell of a job getting that pressure on him. That's why we're going to the 'ship."

Along with Manning, who was hit just four times.

"I've enjoyed playing on the same team as that defense," Manning said.

"I'm glad I haven't had to face them this season, I'll say that. They've been challenging to go against in practice, going back to training camp, but it is special to watch them work and watch them perform on Sunday."

Brady praised not only Denver's front seven, but its star-studded secondary.

"It was just tough for us to ever get in a rhythm," Brady said.

DeMarcus Ware and Derek Wolfe applied plenty of pressure, complementing a "No Fly Zone" secondary that was missing safeties T.J. Ward (ankle) and Darian Stewart (knee) by the end of the game.

Denver, which led the league in defense for the first time in franchise history, held on fourth down inside the 20 on consecutive drives before allowing Rob Gronkowski to haul in a 4-yard TD pass with 12 seconds left.

A bruised and battered Brady tried to hit Julian Edelman over the middle for the tying 2-point conversion. Talib batted the pass into the air and Bradley Roby intercepted it.

The Broncos needed one last big play to secure their spot in the Super Bowl and they got it from the unlikeliest of places - safety Shiloh Keo, a free agent who joined the team last month, smothered the onside kick.

"That was intense," Wolfe said. "But I didn't have any doubt in my heart. I knew we were going to win the game."

Talib said Denver's defense was fired up over being a 3-point underdog at home to a team they'd already beaten, 30-24 in overtime back in November.

"We're the No. 1 seed, got the No. 1 defense," Talib said.

Manning, who suffered through the worst season of his career and dealt with a tear in the plantar fascia near the heel of his left foot that cost him seven starts, improved to 6-11 against his rival with half of those wins coming in AFC championship games.

One was in Indianapolis the year he won his only Super Bowl ring and now he's beaten Brady twice in Denver for the Lamar Hunt Trophy.

So, two months shy of 40, Manning is going to Super Bowl 50 with the chance to become the first starting QB to win Lombardi Trophies for two different franchises.

"The big thing is we've got to win," Broncos boss John Elway said. "It's going to be a tremendous add to Peyton's legacy, but also the Broncos legacy, too. We've given ourselves and opportunity and hopefully saved our best for last and in two weeks go out beat a good football team."

The Broncos just don't get tight when the games get that way - Sunday's win was their NFL record 11th by seven points or fewer.

"We won a lot of games this year just grinding as a football team, playing great defense," coach Gary Kubiak said. "We played tremendous today in making the play at the right time."

Ware, an 11th-year veteran heading to his first Super Bowl, gave a speech to his teammates Saturday night. Tired, he tried to come off the field after Gronkowski's TD. Kubiak burned his final timeout instead.

"We weren't going to play another play without him out there, not if I could help it," Kubiak said.

Kubiak also had high praise for Miller, his fellow Texas A&M alum.

"Today," Kubiak said, "along with the defense, he was big time."

The pass rushers praised Denver's secondary for giving them the time to knock Brady around.

Brady misfired 29 times to go with his 27 completions and finished with a paltry passer rating of 56.4.

Panthers 49, Cardinals 15

In Charlotte, Superman is bringing his cape and his pen to Super Bowl 50. He's leaving behind his camera.

"Yeah, we are going to the Super Bowl. We are not going just to take pictures," Cam Newton said Sunday after leading the Carolina Panthers into the big game with a 49-15 rout of Arizona for the NFC championship. "We are trying to finish this thing off."

That would be against Peyton Manning and the Denver Broncos in two weeks.

"Playing the sheriff," Newton said of Manning. "We're going to live in the moment right now. We're going to be excited."

Newton threw for two touchdowns and ran for two others, and Carolina's big-play defense stifled Arizona's top-ranked offense. The 49 points were the most for an NFC title game winner.

The NFL's new top man at quarterback—Newton is an All-Pro this season—goes against five-time MVP Manning. Carolina is favored by four points.

"We've been dreaming about this moment since Day 1," Newton said. "Our pen has a lot more ink left."

It will be Newton's first trip to the Super Bowl and the second for the Panthers (17-1), who lost to New England 12 years ago. Denver, of course, has made a habit of going to Super Bowls, reaching it for a record-tying eighth time.

And while the Broncos' defense carried it past New England 20-18 for the AFC crown, Carolina's D was just as destructive. It picked off Carson Palmer four times, forced two fumbles by him, and never let up the assault.

Special teams also had a takeaway, and when Carolina grabbed a 24-7 halftime lead this time, it didn't back off, as it did in nearly blowing a 31-point margin a week ago vs. Seattle.

When Newton flew into the end zone for a 12-yard third-quarter touchdown - no, he didn't have the cape on - he posed like a superhero, dabbed a bit, and pointed the Panthers toward the Bay Area.

Newton finished with 335 yards passing and 47 rushing as Carolina won its 13th straight home game, including three in the playoffs.

SIDEBAR

Manning vs Newton in 50th Super Bowl

DENVER (AP)—Today's NFL is all about the quarterbacks, so perhaps it's fitting that the 50th Super Bowl features a matchup between Peyton Manning's Denver Broncos and Cam Newton's Carolina Panthers.

At 39, Manning—the only five-time MVP in history and one of the faces of the league—is the oldest starting QB to lead a team to the big game. Most folks figure his fourth Super Sunday will be the last time he dons a helmet.

"Oh, wow," Newton said. "Playing 'The Sheriff.'"

Newton, meanwhile, is part of the new guard. He is expected to be honored as the MVP for the first time)—ans chanted those three letters during the NFC championship postgame ceremony - and he'll be playing in his first Super Bowl.

Carolina (17-1) ran away with a 49-15 victory over the Arizona Cardinals for the NFC title Sunday night, after Denver (14-4) edged the New England Patriots 20-18 in the AFC.

"There's no question, this is a sweet day, this was a sweet victory," Manning said. "To me, this victory sort of is a great example of what this entire season has been like. It hasn't been easy."

The Feb. 7 game at Santa Clara, California, will be the Broncos' record-tying eighth Super Bowl appearances - they won twice in the late 1990s - and the Panthers' second.

Carolina opened as a 4-point favorite with most bookmakers.

Manning, of course, will get so much of the attention over the next two weeks.

He is 1-2 in past Super Bowls, winning a championship with the Indianapolis Colts in 2007, then losing with the Colts in 2010, before losing with the Broncos in 2014.

But this is a different version of Manning.

Yes, he's still as good as anyone at diagnosing defenses and changing things up - or appearing to, anyway - at the line of scrimmage.

Yes, he's still out there yelling "Omaha!" But he is not quite as capable as he was, once upon a time, when it comes to putting the football exactly where he wants it, especially on deep routes.

This has hardly been a record-setting season for Manning - or, until now, one worth remembering. Overall, the bad far outweighed the good, including one game with a passer rating of 0.0, 17 interceptions to only nine touchdown passes in the regular season, being sidelined for six weeks with a series of injuries, his first NFL game as a backup, and vehemently denying a report linking Manning's wife to the banned drug HGH.

"My role has been different and my contributions are different," Manning said. "But I'm fortunate and grateful that I have the opportunity to contribute still, in some way. And it's a great honor to be going back to the Super Bowl."

He's going to California thanks in large part to the league's best defense, which led the NFL with 52 sacks and allowed fewer yards than anyone else this season, then made life difficult as can be for Tom Brady and the Patriots on Sunday.

"Defensively, we were just tremendous," said Denver's Gary Kubiak, the seventh coach in NFL history to get to the Super Bowl in his first year with a team.

Djokovic survives 5-setter to reach quarterfinals

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Novak Djokovic was looking everywhere for answers, even in the crowd.

The top player in tennis, who won 27 of a possible 28 matches in Grand Slam matches in 2015, had the number 100 in the unforced errors column after his 6-3, 6-7 (1), 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 win over Gilles Simon at the Australian Open.

The win secured his spot in the quarterfinals for the 27th consecutive major, equaling Jimmy Connors at No. 2 in that streak and trailing only Roger Federer's record of 36.

Yet Djokovic still thought it was a forgettable day. He was dissecting the match in an on-court interview Sunday when a burst of laughter from the crowd caught his attention.

"Sorry, everybody is laughing. I just want to hear, what did you say?" Djokovic said, looking into the stands. The answer came back loud and clear: "No more drop shots."

"OK, thanks buddy," Djokovic deadpanned. "I hate to say, but you are absolutely right."

A handful of ill-advised and poorly executed backhand drop shots by Djokovic made up the most glaring of his unforced errors.

"I don't think I've had any number close to 100," he said. "In terms of the level that I've played, it's the match to forget for me."

He hit 62 winners, and won 100 of the 176 rallies of four shots or fewer, but only 48 of the 101 featuring nine shots or more.

"Sometimes you have a brain freeze, if I can call it that," Djokovic said, explaining how he wasn't in rhythm and was trying to finish off points quickly. "Again, I won it, so it's pretty good. When you're playing that bad and still manage to win—hopefully it's going to get better next one."

Simon entered the match with a 1-9 win-loss record against Djokovic, but thought he'd worked out a way to beat the Serbian star by consistently and desperately keeping the rallies alive.

"I know a lot of players wanted me to win this match," the 31-year-old Frenchman said. "A lot of players will feel better with Novak out of the draw."

Federer watched Djokovic's match, before going out to beat No. 15 David Goffin 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 in a match that finished after midnight, and the error toll didn't bring him any joy.

"He makes you miss. He makes you go for the lines and he runs down a lot of balls. A lot of points end in errors," Federer said of Simon. "This was five sets. So, of course, there's going to be a lot of unforced errors piling up. The question is if you have 50, 100, at the end of the day it doesn't matter as long as you win."

Djokovic did just that, improving his record to 36 wins in his last 37 matches at Melbourne Park, and will next play No. 7 Kei Nishikori, who beat No. 9 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 with a more conventional style of game.

Federer, a four-time champion in Australia, secured a quarterfinal against No. 6 Tomas Berdych, a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 winner over Roberto Bautista Agut.

AP
Novak Djokovic of Serbia makes a forehand return to Gilles Simon of France during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Jan. 24, 2016.

Djokovic's struggles increased the drama after a relatively routine start to Day 7, when six-time champion Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova confirmed their quarterfinal date with straight-set wins, ensuring a rematch between last year's finalists.

In other results, Victoria Azarenka couldn't get off court quickly enough to check the score after reaching the Australian Open quarterfinals.

To her elation, it was a Broncos win.

The two-time Australian Open champion had just beaten Barbaro Strycova 6-2, 6-4 in the fourth round on Monday - continuing a three-year sequence of wins against the Czech player that started in the second round in 2014 and included the third round last year—when she wanted to know the result of the AFC title game.

"Can somebody please tell me, did Broncos win?" she said, taking over her on-court TV interview. When she heard the Denver Broncos had beaten the New England Patriots 20-18, she shouted "Yesss!!" - stepping back and raising both arms, "I'm so happy now."

"I was so nervous the whole morning, I didn't watch. I didn't want to know the result," she said. "As you can see I'm a crazy sports fanatic, so I understand you guys when you get all nervous and stuff, because I felt that.

Harden's triple-double leads Rockets over Mavericks

HOUSTON (AP)—Trevor Ariza has rediscovered his long-range shooting, and that is really good news for James Harden and the Houston Rockets.

Ariza scored a season-high 29 points, Harden had 23 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists, and the Rockets rallied for a 115-104 win over the Dallas Mavericks on Sunday.

Ariza made a season-high six 3-pointers after making five on Friday following a three-game stretch when he made just four combined. The always low-key Ariza downplayed his big game.

"I was just getting a lot of open looks," he said. "I had a bigger guy on me and I had the option of going by him when I shoot the ball, and I just felt good shooting."

Harden isn't surprised to see what Ariza has done the past two games.

"He finally found a rhythm," Harden said. "We knew it was going to come."

The Rockets trailed by one entering the fourth quarter, but they used 14-4 run, highlighted by consecutive 3-pointers by Ariza, Jason Terry and Josh Smith, to take a 98-89 lead with about nine minutes left.

Chandler Parsons made a layup for the Mavericks before Houston scored five straight points to push the lead to 103-91. Terry started that stretch with a 3-pointer and Smith juked Dirk Nowitzki to get open for a hook shot, and the Mavericks didn't threaten again.

"We just can't let them knock down shots and shots and shots and let them get good looks after good looks," Dallas guard Wesley Matthews said. "We got away from our game plan and things just didn't work out for us."

Parsons had a season-high 31 points for the Mavericks, who dropped their second straight game.

Smith, who was acquired in a trade with the Clippers on Friday, scored a season-high 16 in his second game back with the Rockets.

"When they brought (Smith) back in here, a veteran player, someone who understands the flow of the game ... he's just been huge for us," Ariza said.

Houston led by 13 midway through the fourth quarter when the Rockets scored four points in a row, including a two-handed dunk by Ariza, to make it 112-95 with about four minutes remaining.

Harden collected his second triple-double of the season and eighth of his career when he dished to Clint Capela for an alley-oop dunk with 1:26 remaining, putting the Rockets up 115-102.

Ariza made his first six shots, including four 3-pointers, to finish the first quarter with 16 points. He cooled off in the second quarter and the Mavericks outscored Houston 29-14 to take a 58-50 halftime lead.

Houston played without Dwight Howard, who missed his second straight game with a sprained left ankle. He was injured in the first minute of Houston's game on Wednesday and interim coach J.B. Bickerstaff isn't sure when he'll return.

Raptors 112, Clippers 94

In Toronto, Kyle Lowry scored 21 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 20 as the Toronto Raptors beat the Los Angeles Clippers 112-94 on Sunday for their season-high eighth straight win.

DeMar DeRozan and Terrence Ross both added 18 points each for the Raptors. Ross shot 5 for 7 on 3-pointers and totaled at least 10 points off the bench for the fourth straight game.

Chris Paul had 23 points and 11 assists for the Clippers, and DeAndre Jordan had 15 and 13 rebounds. JJ Redick scored 17 points for Los Angeles.

The Raptors beat the Clippers for the fourth straight time, completing a second straight season sweep. It also marked the first time in franchise history the Raptors swept both Los Angeles teams in the same season, having beaten the Lakers in both meetings already.

The Raptors' winning streak is the second-longest in franchise history, one short of the team-record set in the 2001-02 season.

Nets 116, Thunder 106

In New York, Brook Lopez scored a season-high 31 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and Brooklyn snapped Oklahoma City's seven-game winning streak.

Kevin Durant had 32 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, but Oklahoma City never led in the game that was delayed four hours by the blizzard that dumped more than 2 feet of snow on New York on Saturday.

Russell Westbrook finished with 27 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists as the Thunder lost for just the fifth time in 27 games.

Taking advantage of a Thunder team missing starting center Steven Adams, Lopez shot 11 for 19 from the field in bouncing back from one of his worst performances of the season. He had been limited to just eight points Friday in a loss to Utah.

Celtics 112, Sixers 92

In Philadelphia, Jae Crowder and Isaiah Thomas scored 20 points each and Boston cruised past Philadelphia.

Avery Bradley had 19 points and Marcus Smart added 16 off the bench for the Celtics, who have won five of seven.

Robert Covington scored 25 points to lead Philadelphia.

The game originally was scheduled for Saturday but was postponed due to Winter Storm Jonas. With Philadelphia's airport closed on Saturday, the Celtics instead practiced in Boston and arrived in Philadelphia on Sunday morning.

Athletics thrilled with new-look bullpen heading into season

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)— As Sean Doolittle scoured the room and chatted up some of his new teammates, Oakland's bearded closer couldn't help but envision the potential of an experienced, new-look bullpen for the Athletics going into 2016.

From offseason acquisitions John Axford and Ryan Madson to Marc Rzepczynski and Liam Hendriks, manager Bob Melvin has a long list of relievers to call upon for any situation or matchup leading to a healthy Doolittle in the ninth inning.

Doolittle is ready for a full season after a strain in his left shoulder derailed his year.

"I like the fact that they're all veteran guys that have a lot of playoff experience, they have a lot of experience being a part of winning teams," Doolittle said at Sunday's FanFest. "So from that aspect, I think that can help not just the bullpen, that can help the whole team. Obviously the pitching aspect of it, there's a lot of depth there, there's a lot of versatility for how we can match up, different roles guys can be in. Everybody has experience pitching in high-leverage situations, which is good. I'm excited to get to work with them."

AP

Sean Doolittle pitches for the Athletics in an undated file photo.

Oakland's relievers owned the worst ERA in the American League last season at 4.63 and third-highest in baseball.

Melvin said former starter Jarrod Parker, recovering from yet another elbow surgery last spring, could be an option for the rotation or in relief.

The right-hander, who twice had the ulnar collateral ligament reconstructed in his pitching arm, was nearing his return from a 2014 Tommy John surgery last season when he was injured while on a rehab assignment with Triple-A Nashville. He had another surgery for an elbow fracture May 19.

The A's finished 68-94 in 2015 for last in the AL West and missed the playoffs after three straight trips.

"Really the issue last year for the most part in those close games was we'd give up some runs late, and the first thing the organization did was go out and sign some high-profile bullpen guys, which we needed," Melvin said. "I know everybody feels good about that."

Having Doolittle back should help, too.

Latte Built fat loss challenge enters third week

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Eight had answered the call of Latte Built owner Derek Cutting's fat loss challenge with their incredible journey to having a healthy lifestyle at the start of the year entering the third week.

Cutting held weigh-in and body fat percentage test last Jan. 10 at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan. He got all the basic information including the starting weight and body fat percentage of participants.

Most of the participants, in the first full week of the challenge, had already lost two to three pounds, while two of them dropped 2.5 percent of their body fat.

Cutting, the overall champion in last year's Dee Clayton Championships, has also designed basic meal plans for each week and has been updating the eight of their progress on a Facebook group page.

"I designed a basic meal plan since this is the first time most have done anything like this and learning the basics of nutrition needs focus. I designed a one week plan of five meals per day," said Cutting.

He added that all meals are high in protein, low in carbohydrates, and moderate in good fats. "No processed food but rather organic if they can get their hands on it."

Cutting also assigns a workout plan of the week for the eight participants like the Tabata style workout, which participants continually do in one particular exercise non-stop for one minute.

"Then a second exercise for another minute and so forth. There are 12 total exercises for three sets and each set will take 12 minutes," said Cutting.

A weigh-in and body fat percentage check is held every week in the 30-day challenge to know the progress of the eight participants.

The Top 3 placers will win cash and other prizes. The overall winner will get a one-month free one-on-one personal training (worth $390) with Cutting, while the runner-up will have a free two-week one-on-one personal training with him. The Top 3 finishers will also get cash prizes with the amount to be determined by the number of participants.

AFC

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crazed nation like Japan took many years to become a powerhouse in the region.

"Malaysia used to beat Japan in the 70s and late 80s, but look where Japan is right now after working so hard for many years to improve," he said.

Meanwhile, Ranganathan visited the island not only to promote football, but also use the sport as a tool to help make CNMI residents good contributors to the community. He conducted a seminar on social responsibility with officials from various local clubs attending last Sunday's event at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

SLLB

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tion to our Little League program," said SLLB president A.J. Murig, who was joined in the turnover ceremony by the various team managers.

"It (donation) goes to show that the Little League program is not just a program but also a family. We will continue to build bridges and strengthen this youth program. This donation is a big assistance to our program here and I appeal to our people residing in San Diego to also thank the San Carlos Little League and continue to support the program there. The same goes to the rest of our people residing in different states—I encourage them to support the Little League programs in their area," the SLLB head added.

With the new season just around the corner, Murig is calling all team officials to comply with the league requirements.

"We are trying to stick with this date (Feb. 13) so we encourage all teams to get their papers ready so we can verify them before the season starts," Murig said.

As of yesterday, 24 teams have registered for the 2016 season with 10 of them entered in the Major, four each in the Junior and Senior League divisions, and six in the Big League. However, the number of participants could still change as SLLB is still entertaining inquiries from other interested teams. Major division matches will be played at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield, while games in the three other categories will take place at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

"As for now, unless lights are fixed before Feb. 13, we will be having Big League games on weekends, so the weekend schedule for Saturdays and Sundays will be one game for each division—Junior, Senior, and Big League—at the Tan Ko Field," Murig said.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Little League Baseball officials and coaches pose with the donated equipment from San Carlos Little League in San Diego, California, during a turnover ceremony last Friday at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

SONICS

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the lone player on his team to hit double figures. Jeffrey Castro, Gerald Flores, and Jun Javier were the three other Sonics players to make more than one field goal against Rollers 2 and they combined for 18 markers to back up Ong.

The Sonics were seeded first in the playoffs, but had a hard time against the No. 4-ranked Rollers 2, whose pesky defense rattled the former in the first half. The Sonics had the ceiling advantage, but could not get the ball into the paint without a legitimate guard as Castro is more of a shooting guard and Bryan De Guzman, and J.P. River are still lacking experience to quarterback for their squad.

Without good ball handlers, the Sonics big men were forced to bring the ball down and on several occasions they either committed turnovers or Rollers 2 players stole the possessions and converted them into baskets.

Chris Aneo and Aaron Ogumoro scored most of those points off the Sonics' errors in the first half to give Rollers 2 a shaky 20-18 halftime lead.

Rollers 2 went on to continue playing pressured defense against the Sonics, but the latter settled down and finally found ways to get the ball into their players in the shaded Lane. Ong got a bundle in the second half after making only two field goals in the first. Flores also contributed with his uncontested point-blanked shot off Michael Espinosa's no-look pass against two Rollers defenders giving the Sonics their biggest lead, 37-26, under three minutes left in the game.

Rollers 2 lost the lead and eventually the game as it failed to complement its good defense with a steady offense. It was held to one field goal and 6 points in the first 16 minutes and change of the second half. Kenji Abobo hit the lone field goal for Rollers 2, while Jude Tengcho added three free throws and Aneo had a split.

Ogumoro gave Rollers 2 its second field goal and scored 2 more points from the foul line, while Abobo had back-to-back field goals, however these were not enough as they made these with less than two minutes left in the game and the Sonics were already poised to win the match and advance to the finals.

The Sonics will battle the division championship against the winner of the Rollers 1-Ol'Aces semis game this Thursday. The finals will be played at 7:30pm after the 6pm title showdown between Sun Palace and Lob City.

Lob City eased its way into the finals after pulling away in the second half.

Ahead by only 3 after the first half, 24-21, Lob City turned on the heat in the final frame as it more than doubled Panty Droppers' output, 36-17. Kyla Ito and Jeralyn Castillo teamed up in the breakaway scoring 14 and 10 points, respectively.

Ito ended up with a game-high 25 markers, while Jeralyn chipped in 18. Friendly Joy Pena was the lone twin digit scorer for Panty Droppers with her 10 markers.

Boys U19 Game

Sonics 40— Ong 12, Castro 7, Flores 6, Javier 5, Espinosa 3, Tekopua 2, Fidelino 2, Lansang 2, Borromeo.

Rollers 2 34— Ogumoro 11, Aneo 9, Abobo 6, Tengco 3, Deleon Guerrero 3, Hudkins 2.

Scoring by halves: 18-20, 40-34.

Women's Game

Lob City 60 — Ito 25, Jeralyn Castillo 18, Alegre 8, Jeraldine Castillo 5, M. Kautz 2, Wally 2.

Panty Droppers 38 — Pena 10, Garon 8, Francisco 8, Rogoyawa 6, Lumabi 4, Valino 2.

Scoring by halves: 24-21, 60-38.

JP World Basketball League Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tan Holdings senior vice president and chief finance officer Eli Arago, fourth left, joins the company's players for a group photo after receiving the championship trophy in the 2nd JP World Corp. Customer Appreciation Basketball League last Friday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium. Tan Holdings beat Joeten, 86-80, in the deciding Game 3 of the finals series.

Tan Holdings' Elmer Esdrelon, right, tries to dribble past the defense of Joeten's Dixon Kwon.

Joeten's Athan Taisague stops and pops for a jumper.

Joeten's Alex Lauron shoots in between the defense of Tan Holdings' R.J. Nonato, left, and Richard Kim.

Tan Holdings' R.J. Nonato draws contact on Joeten's Alex Lauron.

Joeten's Sid Quan unloads a jumper in front of Tan Holdings' Matt Duenas, while teammate Jason Sablan, left, and Tan Holdings' Gerald Rivera jockey for position.

Tan Holdings' Dindo Pablo eludes two Joeten defenders for a fast-break layup.

Joeten players show their runner-up trophy presented by JP World staff members.

Joeten's Dixon Kwon stretches for a layup.

Defense lifts Broncos past Brady, Pats

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Djokovic survives 5-setter to reach quarterfinals

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Sonics, Lob City enter finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 670 Sonics and Lob City eliminated their respective foes in contrasting fashion to barge into the finals of the 2015 Tan Holdings Christmas Basketball Tournament last Saturday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

The Sonics outclassed Rollers 2, 40-35, to notch the first finals berth in the boys U19 division, while Lob City romped past Panty Droppers, 60-36, to set a title duel against Sun Palace, which earlier downed Mt. Carmel School, 46-40 in the other Final Four pairing.

Djay Ong led the Sonics in the low-scoring semis game, recording 12 points. He was

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sonics' Djay Ong runs into the defense of Rollers 2's Chris Aneo while other Rollers 2 players try to step into the play during the second half of their semis game in the Tan Holdings holiday caging last Saturday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

SLLB eyes Feb. 13 opening, receives donated equipment

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Nolan Kluge, Jaimeson Mooney, and Torin Mooney, and umpire James Patocka, back row, pose with the baseball equipment San Carlos Little League of San Diego, California, donated to Saipan Little League.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Little League Baseball got a timely donation from San Carlos Little League in San Diego.

San Carlos LL, through Fielders manager Pat Tenorio, turned over used bats, catcher's gear, and helmets to SLLB officials last Friday or less than a month before the island's biggest sports program for the youth opens its 2016 season. The new SLLB competition will start on Feb. 13.

"On behalf of the entire SLLB family, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the San Carlos Little League organization in San Diego, California, its president Mike Bitter, and the players for this generous dona-

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AFC official: CNMI football heading into right direction

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Asian Football Confederation official Dr. Annathurai Ranganathan believes CNMI football is taking the necessary steps to catch up with other countries in its region.

"You're doing the right things," Ranganathan, head of AFC's Corporate School Responsibility Unit and recently visited the island to lead the distribution of 500 ultra-durable soccer balls to various schools on the island through the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association.

During his stay on Saipan, the AFC official managed to watch CNMI players' training sessions at the Oleai Sports Complex and talk to coaches.

"I watched the youth training pool play in scrimmage and the players have a lot of talents. With proper training and guidance from good coaches, I can see the CNMI closing the gap against other countries in their region in the age group competitions. You're heading into the right direction," Ranganathan said.

"NMIFA is doing a good job, especially at the grassroots level. I can also see the support of the parents, the schools, and other members of the community. When these are put together along with developing new pitches, having equipment, and training new coaches and game officials, CNMI football will grow and reach the level it aspires for," he added.

Ranganathan, however, reminded the CNMI to be very patient in achieving their goals, as even a football-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
AFC's head for Corporate School Responsibility Unit Dr. Annathurai Ranganathan, left, gestures to NMIFA president Jerry Tan after the turnover ceremony of 500 ultra-durable balls to CNMI schools last Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex.